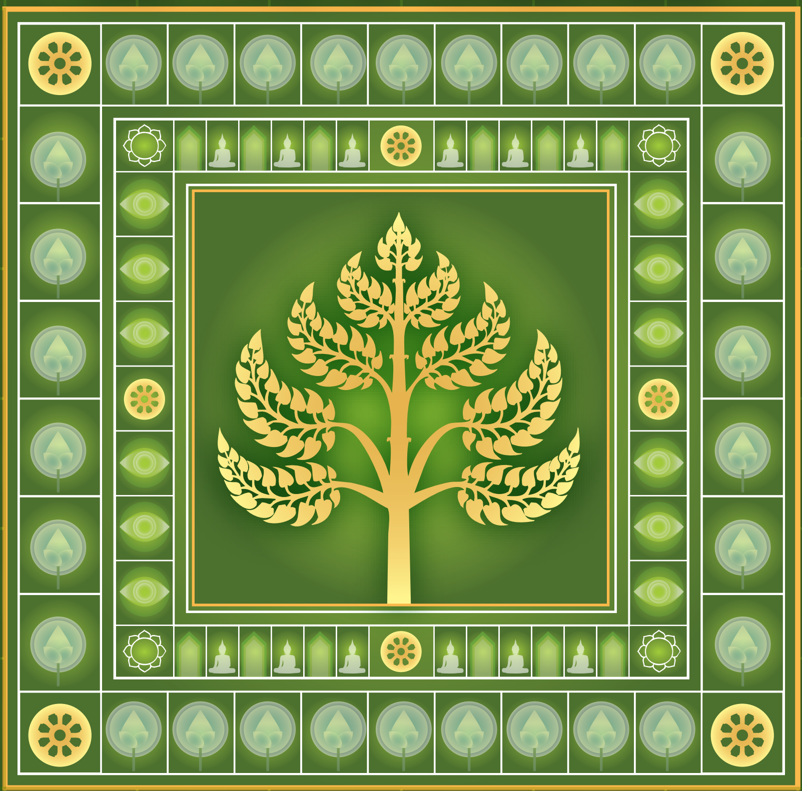
The International Association of
Buddhist Universities
(IABU)

Teaching Dhamma in New Lands



Academic Papers presented at the 2nd IABU Conference
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Main Campus
Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand

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2012 IABU Editorial Committee:

Preface

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) has been privileged to witness and play an instrumental role in developing and hosting successful UNDV and IABU celebrations, annually. As always, we are all very grateful to the Royal Thai Government for its constant support, and thank the Thai Supreme Sangha Council for its blessings, guidance and support. We are indebted, also, to the United Nations for recognizing the thrice-sacred Buddhist holy day.

We had to delay the 2nd IABU Conference, due to the extreme flooding that shut down MCU for nearly two months. It has been 2600 years since the Enlightenment of our Great Teacher, and we have gathered here from across the globe, from many nations, to again pay tribute to his birth, enlightenment, and death – occurring on the same day in different years. The 2nd IABU Conference is running this year, due to the postponement, with the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak Conference. The IABU Secretariat now plays a major role in our celebrations, particularly in the academic program of the conference.

This publication could not have been possible without the persistence, hard work, and dedication of MCU's scholars and staff. I wish to thank all members of the International Council for The Day of Vesak and the Executive Council of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, and the other members of the Editorial Committee for their devotion. I am also grateful to our many donors, sponsors, and dedicated volunteers who return year after year to support the IABU and United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations.

We all truly celebrate the Buddha's Enlightenment, and hope these words reach the hearts and minds of the readers.



The Most Ven. Prof. Dr. PhraDharmakosajarn

Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

President, ICDV & IABU

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2nd IABU Conference: Introduction to the Teaching Dhamma in New Lands Volume

Welcome to the 2nd International Association of Buddhist Universities Academic Conference on Buddhist Philosophy and Praxis. This conference seems like it has been a long time in the making, due to the extensive flooding that ravished Thailand, and certainly left Mahachulalongkorn rajavidyalaya University, our gracious and great host, inundated with almost 2 meters of water. The university, where the IABU Secretariat is currently headquartered, has overcome this difficult situation, and we are now ready to hold this conference. The conference was originally scheduled for 16-18 December 2011, but to make this happen seemed like an impossibility. We are now here for the rescheduled date: 31 May – 02 June 2012. We have noticed that our 2nd IABU Conference coincides with the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations – but our aims are different for this occasion. It's quite fascinating that a single university can host two large international conferences at the same time. We further give our humble respects to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and to the Thai Sangha Supreme Council for enabling this conference to proceed.

When this conference was in its planning stages, we had initial discussions on the main theme: Buddhist Philosophy – but we did not want papers that just gave idealistic proposals. Instead we aspired to gain papers that demonstrated philosophy in action, or the conversion of an idea into an actuality – and thus we wanted to implement or emphasize the aspect of praxis, into the conference. We had scheduled a practical meditation session, where elected Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana masters would hold a meditation session along with a question and answer period; but due to the merging of the two conferences: the 2ndIABU Conference and the 9th UNDV Conference – there was no longer enough allotted time for the meditation sessions, so it was regretfully eliminated. We hope that the gathering of academics took advantage of this expertise that availed themselves for this august gathering.

As all the scholars can surmise, there are several formats or applications of Buddhism, some are living-systems, and some have become either extinct or have merged with existing systems. Buddhist Philosophy is a vast topic that fills many bookshelves. Most of us have read texts on early-Indian or Vedic-philosophy and have seen the emergence into what we are discussing: Buddhism – but by no means are we holding a singular view of a Buddhism. The overwhelming amount of scholars present here surmise that dependent-origination is probably the supreme-teaching of the Buddha, or the one doctrine that gathers the most attention. The term: 'praxis' has caused some confusion amongst our scholars. If the term was defined: we could determine that praxis is the application or process through which the philosophical or doctrinal point becomes actualized or put into place (practiced) – it's about the endeavor. We might have taken the term from international-socialistic literature, which emphasizes that besides just having philosophy – the point of all of us studying the Buddha's preserved words is for the sake of improving our world – to eliminate suffering from the social experience. How have we actually done this?

Approximately 160 articles were received the 2nd IABU Conference from around the world. We have selected about 110 of them for presentation at the conference. There are articles from

different levels of scholars, ranging from the most senior of professors and on downward to undergraduates. Each of the articles have merits of interest within them. We decided on four programs (sub-themes). This is the volume for the session on Buddhist Psychotherapy.

PANEL SUMMARIZATION – TEACHING DHAMMA IN NEW LANDS:

Papers were to focus on ways in which the Dharma is integrating into the societies and cultures of predominantly Christian countries. The papers were to address sociological and cultural issues and not merely ritualistic and practice based aspects of Buddhist traditions. For example, studies pertaining towards: gender, family, ethnic issues and dissemination; intra-Buddhist relations; Buddhism and Secularism; Buddhist relationships with the host-country's social, political and religious culture; and Buddhism and the media. Additionally, papers on teaching Buddhism are welcomed, topics may discuss: new ways of teaching Buddhism, and how can the Dhamma be taught and employed for the welfare of society.

Many of the papers in this panel could not be properly edited in time, despite the delays from the massive flooding that affected Central Thailand. Some papers arrived late or several authors kept asking for permission to correct minor errors. Many papers contain imperfections' please excuse the remaining mistakes, as the papers have been transformed greatly from previous versions. The panel begins with a number of papers from Indonesia, and then progresses:

Again, several of the conference papers are related towards Indonesia. They are the following contributions. ZaenalEkoputro's*How Muslim Perceives Vihara? A study on Muslim Perception of the Establishment of ViharaAvelokiteswara in Pamulang, Banten Province, Indonesia* discusses the vihara that was built by Chinese residents. At this vihara they espouse compassion towards every human; and the offerings of this temple which benefits the needy people seeking food regardless of the religious identification of the hungry. There is also a demonstration of how this new vihara brings the religiously diverse society together. Edi Ramawijaya Putra's unedited paper: *Buddhism In Indonesia; The Current Issues Of Development Of Buddhism And Modern Muslims* discusses if Buddhism in Indonesia has failed or is being reestablished successfully? Buddhism might be a solution to the problems in Indonesia, but it is clearly evident that Indonesia is a strong Islamic nation, and no change is expected to occur any time soon in Indonesia despite any well-wishes. Yulianti's largely unedited article, *The Social Role of Chanting Tradition in Indonesia Buddhist Society* discusses the endeavor of chanting by Indonesian Buddhists, and in this sense, Buddhists in general. She discusses some of the mental benefits of chanting and the resulting social cohesion stemming from the conventional sense of community-worship. Kustiani's article: *Buddhist Women in Indonesia and Polygamy Issue* illuminates a social problem in Buddhist societies where a man takes on additional women as wives. Indonesia, as an Islamic society generally accepts the taking on of more women. There seems to be much gender bias in the construction or rules on marriage in the national legislation. She ventures into the sacred literature for Buddhists to highlight her points, that ultimately pertain to someone's interpretation of sexual misconduct. WilisRengganias ihEndahEkowati's*BhikkhuAsinJinarakkhita's Interpreting and Translating Buddhism within Indonesian Cultural and Political Contexts* discusses Venerable Jinarakkhita's enduring influence upon Indonesian Buddhism and how the national identity of pancasila interplay with the interpretation.

Two papers are centered around Buddhism in Uganda. KagendoMurungi's*Struggling with Identities: An African Buddhist Feminist* discusses her journey into Buddhism and her encounters with Venerable Buddharakkhita, of Uganda, during his stay in West Virginia. She has filmed a documentary about Venerable Buddharakkhita's life and teachings; and discusses her own transformation and where these teachings apply in her life. Ven. Buddharakkhita's*Trials and Tribulations of Teaching Dhamma in Uganda* discusses his recent problems with an assassination attempt on his life, establishing Buddhism in a non-Buddhist land, and the doctrines that he propagates – in what is perhaps the most instructive and intriguing articles in the collection presented at the conference.

Several papers discuss Buddhism in the United States of America, but from diverse perspectives. Blaze Marpet's*The Beatnik Buddhist: Jack Kerouac and the Development of American Buddhism* discusses the life of Jack Kerouac and his Buddhist experience, certainly covering his writings and the fact that he was born and died as a Catholic, and was only instructed by a marginal or minimally accomplished teacher. That Kerouac became a teacher in this weak tradition, and that this tradition became the most popularized version of Buddhism, perhaps is a testimony to the deviance found in American Buddhism – or the misunderstandings of what traditional buddhisms are all about. Ven. Dr. Chao Chu's *Teaching Dharma in the United States* discusses his experienced perspective, from giving lectures, performing wedding ceremonies, performing meditation retreats in prisons; and stresses that most Americans are appreciating the training of vipassana without the culture of Theravada or Mahayana Buddhism – but sometimes these newcomers to the tradition lack the depth that a traditional bhikkhu can provide. Dr. John M. Scorsine's*Buddhism in the Land of Grey and Steel* discusses teaching Dhamma in prisons and the laws granting American prisoners religious freedom despite the prejudices against non-Christian traditions. Dr. Jonathan H. X. Lee's *Acting Out: Thai American Buddhists Encounters with White Privilege and White Supremacy* discusses the elements of racism that white-Christianized people in general inflict upon the wider society, or the marginalized communities – through a multitude of legalized tricks, such as zoning laws, and the associated struggles with building a Buddhist temple in a neighborhood, as a right of every American community.As the United States of America is a very diverse nation, these papers demonstrate that it's a strength within Buddhism to have such diversity.

Two papers here are seen through the lenses of Sri Lankan authors. Ven. Kannadeniye Santa's *Challenges Sri Lankan Buddhist monks face in disseminating Buddhism to children growing up in the US* discusses his methods for teaching Dhamma to Sri Lankan youth living in the United States. From his suggestion that monks are the traditional missionaries and educators of the populations, he moves to suggest that Buddhist Sunday Schools are a success – but only a success if the monk has adequate ability to teach in English, as it is a fact that many foreign-born bhikkhus teaching in American cannot discuss matters in English. He further allows for a discussion on the topics that he propagates in his classes. Dr. LeenaSeneheweera's*Bridging society and Buddhism through a woman's role of teaching the Dhamma as depicted in selected visual art works from Sri Lanka* discusses the honorable position of women in society, but sometimes in Buddhist art women are shown in disparaging configurations.

Two additional and equally insightful papers dedicated to the diverse American experience are grouped here. Jennifer Savage's *Dharma in Action: The Gift of Western Female Dharma Teachers* discusses a number of literary endeavors by two Buddhist nuns: ThubtenChodron and AyyaKhema. She brings out their struggles and through her feminist perspective suggests that indeed active

demonstrations of dhamma are more effective. Dr. J. Abraham Vélez de Cea's*Buddha and the New Atheists: On the Art of Teaching the Dhamma in the Bible Belt* discusses the immoral perspective of atheism and how this gets confused with moralistic Buddhist principles. He addresses, in his deeply intriguing article, the confusion over the concept of the Buddha being an atheist – but does not discuss the interactions by the Buddha with the deities, preserved in the Tipitaka. He raises the question of the Abhidhamma being something philosophically interesting to westerners, and this might be what can catch their attention. Despite the Buddha being a historical figure, he still questions if we can determine the Buddha to be a sort of God?

In a section dealing with how dhamma has come into certain regions or countries, the following papers have been grouped together. Saw Yee Mon's *Exporting Dhamma to New Lands: Empirical Approaches of Teaching Dhamma in Predominantly Non-Buddhist States* discusses how Buddhist monks have brought the teachings of the Buddha into non-Buddhist states within Myanmar and the larger outside world. The author discusses underutilized themes from the Dhamma. Alina Morales Troncoso's*The Dhamma in Spanish-Speaking Countries* discusses how Buddhism is arising within Mexican society, in the absence of resident/immigrant communities. She discusses some differences between some Buddhist traditions and the battle she faces while addressing misconceptions about Theravada Buddhism. Réjane Serra's *Social Interest and the Place of Buddhism in France*discusses how Buddhism has come into France as an effect from their imperialistic experience. With many people disillusioned from Christianity, Buddhism is one of the best options for people. She then discusses Dhammas and meditations towards shaping people into responsible citizens. Ven. RujingMao's*The Most Outstanding Bhikkhuni and First Bhikkhuni's Institute in Contemporary China* discusses a responsible citizen and a new institution in her paper. From being an important figure in the Buddhist Association of China, she also led the charge for bhikkhuni ordinations in China. Her intellectual background fueled her desire to open a higher education institution for Bhikkhunis in China. To conclude these geo-specific themed papers, Ven. Dr. SomboonVuddhikaro's Buddhist Tolerance for Peaceful Co-Existence of Asian Nations discusses how Asians should have more tolerance towards each other in order to live harmoniously in a globalized society, and provides the advice from the Buddha on the topic of tolerance.

There are also a number of thoughtful and diversified papers. Suryo W. Prawiroatmodjo's *Teaching Buddhism by Understanding the Phenomena of Nature: Integrating Dhamma Teaching Methodology into Environment Education Program - A New Approach to Comprehend Buddhist-Environmental Teaching Practice* discusses education techniques to bring out environmental issues through bringing in Dhamma lessons into the education-experience. He concludes with a demand for the IABU to implement teaching-methodologies towards environmental education. Cynthia Drake's *American Habits and Fresh Baked Bread*discusses how Buddhism in the United States of America might be the antidote to rampant consumerism and individualism – two ideas that are against the nature of humanity. She also discusses how mindful living will benefit humanity; and how shoppers, swappers and stoppers impact American Buddhism. Joan Buchanan's *Are We Teaching the Way Our Youth Learn?*, discusses that our teaching abilities or methods might need to change if we are teaching a different tradition, one quite different from Buddhism. She discusses many problems found with evaluating the youths in society. She progresses to discuss the different methods by different Buddhist organizations. Dr. Malcolm Voyce's*The Role of Rules in Personal Development and Interpretations of the Vinaya in Western Countries* discusses teaching the Vinaya as a legal-text, and asks several questions to determine the place of the regulations as a genre.SusmitaBarua's*Bridging*

Science and Spirituality through Buddhist Philosophy of Knowledge discusses trying to get science into the Buddhist mindset and covers a lot of technical material from the Buddhist literature; and she concludes by saying that humans have a great capacity to learn, and that we should be a refuge unto ourselves. José A. Rodríguez's *Being Buddhist in New Lands: Mapping Buddhist Social-Cultural Identities* discusses a practitioner's social space, values and visions and other ideas through data analysis and intriguing visual graphs. Matthew JA Spencer's *Buddhism and "Situationists" on Character and the Virtues* discusses a lot of different issues, in a very interesting philosophical discussion – difficult to summarize briefly, but much of what is written pertains to ethics.

There are some additional papers that discuss fascinating social aspects. Geoffrey Bamford's*Clinical Mindfulness: A Successful Cultural Adaptation &ADhamma Opportunity* discusses that interest in university Buddhist societies has fallen, and meditation centers are no longer growing. The big figures still being quoted are from the 1960's, but now the problem is that the need for quality teachers is paramount, and they desire more depth in the teachings – therefore, clinical mindfulness is proposed as the solution because people are being shifted into these institutions, where there is a clear demarcation between therapists and patients. Instruction is often based on the brahmaviharas – giving love for oneself and others.Dr. Maya Joshi's *Buddhisms in India Today: Problems and Possibilities of a Pluralistic Paradigm*discusses the social space, and interesting characters who remain relatively unknown to Westerners. The life of RahulaSankritayan offers fascinating inspiration; she briefly covers Ambedkar; and further discusses Lama KushokBakula and Bhante Sanghasena – people that inspire the larger world through their endeavors. Dr. YaghoobForoutan's *Multiculturalism and Challenges of Religion: The Place of Buddhism from a Comparative Perspective*is basically a sociological study of Buddhist female immigrants, discussing their education level, and a variety of other variables. While this paper does not directly deal with teaching Dhamma in new lands, it deals with the potential for Dhamma to be spread in these new lands, if these women raise their children to be Buddhist – an issue not fully explored in the paper.

The next three papers pertain towards institutions, either recently established or ones yet to leave the ground. Dr. Helen J. Rosen's *Bringing Meditation to the Community: The Applied Meditation Studies Program at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies, Glenside, PA., USA,* discusses the interesting and innovative ways in which the institution is run – accounting for student input into the direction of the courses; and the projects developed by the students. Ricardo Guerrero's *Towards opening the first Theravada Center in Spain discusses some sociological issues related towards Spain and then moves into recent historical matters dealing with the emergence of Buddhism in Spain, such as with: the Spanish Association of Theravada Buddhism and the Spanish Center of Theravada Buddhism.* Winston Velazco's*Buddhism in New Lands* discusses the ease at which information can travel, and the potential for new organizations to become established, particularly the Hispanic Institute of Buddhist Studies, associated around the Dhammavihara, in Mexico. More work indeed lies ahead.

Concluding the Conference Collection of Articles:

In this large conference, we have discussed many facets of Buddhism. From teaching Dhamma in places were Buddhism isn't strongly established; to unifying the diverse Buddhist philosophical views; for Buddhist psychotherapy; and even Buddhist meditation and philosophy –

many difficult ideas manifested. It seems the conference was a success. However, to be self-critical: did we miss the mark? Did we adequately discuss the matters pertaining to teaching Dhamma in new lands where Buddhism has not been fully established? It's a fair question to ask. Did we succeed in discussing Buddhist Philosophy & Praxis? Please take the time to read over all of these articles at your leisure and make these debate-pieces back at your institutions, make these pieces for conversations and for growth. Build upon these ideas for future situations. Are these pieces successful examples of real transformations? Do they transfer well from mere theory to applicable situations? We hope we have taken measures to improve your comprehension of Buddhism, through these multi-variety contributions. We hope we have improved upon Buddhist scholarship. Please enjoy the 2nd IABU Academic Conference and various papers on Buddhist Philosophy & Praxis.

Teaching Dhamma in New Lands

Maintaining the Vihara Inside a Muslim Society: A Study on the Vihara Kwan In Thang in Pamulang, Banten Province, Indonesia

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Nowadays, we have seen the emergence of Buddhist activities in many urban and rural areas of Indonesia where Islam has a deep rooted in this country. One piece of evidence is the establishment of monasteries in many places, although the society of the surrounding area is predominantly Muslim. We have almost never heard of Muslims confronting the establishment of a monastery. It doesn't mean that disruptions towards any monastery has never occurred: one of the latest aggravations was the plea of some Muslims in Tanjung Balai (North Sumatra Province) to remove the Amitabha Buddha Statue in the Vihara Tri Ratna in early 2011.[1]

The current dynamics of Buddhism in Indonesia is not only marked by the establishing new monasteries, but also denoted by the forming of new Buddhist societies. According to Leo Suryadinata, there is no doubt that Chinese religions and Chinese Buddhism have seen a revival after the fall of Soeharto. The more democratic atmosphere has provided minority religions with a new lease of life. Nevertheless, Buddhism appears to be able to develop better than Confucianism. For one thing, many old regulations and lingering governmental prejudice against Confucianism have not been eradicated.[2] In these days, there have been a number of Buddhist societies conducting their activities in certain areas which are surrounded by Muslim society. Currently, Buddhists can develop their society without any intimidation from outsider, including state prohibition.

In fact, the building of many monasteries (vihara) as a symbol of the current development of Buddhism in Indonesia remains productive. One of these features can be traced back to the establishment of Vihara Kwan In Thang which is located in Betawi Muslim community in Pamulang, Banten Province. This monastery was built in early 2000, and now is vigorously active in serving dhamma teachings and offers social aid. Just as many other monasteries, this monastery has never been annoyed until these days. It is unlike for example, local Muslim confronts establishing churches like what we have seen in Bekasi and Bogor in West Java Province.

I would like here to find out the way in which Buddhists could maintain the Buddha teaching inside Muslim society. And also, I would like to investigate how Muslim who settled around the monastery could accept the Buddhist community in their area. I have researched the vihara and then, it data combined with study of literatures.

1 http://www.tribunnews.com/2010/11/01, accessed 10 August, 2011.

2 Suryadinata, Leo. *Buddhism and Confucianism in Contemporary Indonesia Recent Developments*, in Lindsey, Tim and Pausacker, Helen (Ed.). *Chinese Indonesians; Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*. Singapore: Institute of South-east Asian Studies. 2005. p. 90.

Vihara Kwan In Thang in Pondok Cabe, Tangerang, Banten Province

This monastery (vihara) was built in the year of 2000 where Reformasi era had just begun in Indonesia to disalign with the prior authoritarian regime. In other words, there was a political situation shift occurring in Indonesia, leaving from totalitarian regime and entering into democracy. Reformasi has seen as an important part in current history of Indonesia because it was the big marker for determining the establishment of new freedom for the people, ranging from free participation over election to religious expression.

Located in Pamulang area which is subject to South Tangerang district in Banten Province, Vihara Kwan In Thang is surrounded by Muslim community which predominantly composites of Betawi ethnic. It is located in the southern part area of Jakarta metropolitan city, the capital city of Indonesia. This can be reached approximately 2 hours away from the Soekarno-Hatta Airport, Jakarta.

The vihara's people are mostly of Chinese descent who resides around the vihara. Most of them work as businessmen, selling building materials, chemicals, and foodstuff for instance. It should be added that some of its elite member themselves were not born in this area, but they migrated from many other cities which Chinese is being noted as a great number of population such as Pontianak, Palembang, Medan and many other cities. Tjeng Eddy Sastro himself, the leader of the vihara, was born in Pontianak and he admitted that his origin was Teuchew sub Chinese ethnic family in Pontianak. Previously, he was not a Buddhist. After having serious problem with his business and his family, then he had felt that it could be solved by Kwan Im's intervention, he latterly converted to Mahayana Buddhism.[3]

When I visited there, some people were worshipping in the main building of the vihara. Soon I smelled the joss sticks smoke which were burning from inside the main building. Cik Amoy, the person who is responsible for daily matter of the vihara, greeted me warmly and then she showed me any kind of stuff for worship. There were some fruits which put them on each plate offered before the Buddha Maitreya sculpture. She told me it was a matter of thing regarded to symbolize the respect to god.

She admitted that she came from Palembang and she had moved to Jakarta after graduating her senior high school. She had been chosen the vihara because she wanted to maintain the Chinese traditional religion. It should be added that many of the vihara people practices vegetarian. In Indonesia, vegetarian is commonly practiced by Mahayana Buddhist.

One can assume about what type of the society that tries to confirm the new land. Like Eddy Sastro, Cik Amoy herself and most of her colleagues are not local born, but they left their homeland and then moved to Jakarta for seeking better life and job. Therefore, their residences are rather mixed up with any other tribes' people instead of living exclusively with the same tribe.

She explained that as long as she involved in the vihara, there have been no objections from their Muslim neighbor, especially for conducting services in the vihara. Actually, this vihara was built in the area where Muslim is recorded as dominant number. Since it was built, it attracted the local people who have never seen vihara, particularly with it full Chinese style. Located at the edge of main road between Bogor and Jakarta, those who pass the street will definitely be amazed when observing it in terms of its stunning Chinese architecture.[4]

[3] An interview with a board of the vihara, 12 September 2011.

[4] An interview with Cik Amoy, 25 September 2011.

Actually, there is another vihara that was built next to the Vihara Kwan In Thang, the Vihara Avelokiteswara. The main feature that distinguishes between the former and the latter, while the latter provided some ordained people who have been staying in the vihara, the former does not. The former is intended for people especially for paid respect and homage to Goddess Kwan Im only. Here, it depends on which Buddhist way they chose for worshipping the Buddha, but they can visit each vihara as long as they need it. Many Christians of Chinese descent also worshipped in this vihara.

When I asked another person in the vihara about whether or not he knows Muslim figuresd around at the vihara area for instance, he acclaimed that he know the well-known youth Muslim leader in Banten, Abdul Rozak who has visited the vihara. This figure was visiting the vihara when he invited by the vihara board in certain event. Abdul Rozak is a religious figure representing young Islamic scholars who graduated. His bachelor degree from Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University. His view on pluralism is an essential social capital for Indonesia made him able to visit the vihara.

Reportedly, the governor of Banten Province, Atut Chosiah has also paid her attention to the vihara. For example, she recently invited by the committee of Vaissak Day celebration from the vihara last June 2011 that was hosting a celebration of Vaissak in a meeting hall at Karawaci, Tangerang of Banten. The governor herself, who also known for her background from a family of *jawara* -a common term to refer the local strong man in Banten Province, committed that she will protect the minority religious group. In addition, the head of Religious Affair Department of Banten is also recorded has had visited the vihara, especially when he opened the inter-sangha Buddhist meeting in 2008.[5]

This well Muslim responds to the vihara is amazed me, because this vihara is not really far from the quarrel area which is Ahmadiyah Muslim community tortured by local Muslim people. In 2005, the national headquarter of Indonesian Ahmadiyah group, which was located only 40 minute by car from the vihara, was being damaged and some of its members were injured in defending their belief and their property. This is most likely the beginning of Ahmadiyah persecution that occurred in almost every place in Indonesia since then. After that persecution, other persecutions to the Ahmadiyah group have been raised and continued until it most horrible thing happened in February 2011, when six of Ahmadyah member were murdered in Cikeusik, Pandeglang, Banten.

In this sense, I am very interested in the people of vihara on how they could maintain their group and conduct their services within the certain kind of Muslim features. In addition, I am also interested in why another Muslim could tolerate the vihara and its people.

The Doctrine of *Welas Asih* (Compassion)

The most obvious thing that can be learnt from this vihara is how the vihara people could cultivate self-awareness in their daily life. From Buddhist perspective, there is an important concept for Buddhists to restrain oneself in order to avoid any kind of destruction acts to all human beings through sharing love and compassion in everyday life or *welas asih*. By spreading love and compassion to all human beings, anybody will attain self awareness and calm mind.

[5] Interview with the former of the Head of Religious Affair of Banten, Romly, July 2011.

Cik Amoy admitted that compassionate to all human being, including to the Muslim neighbor is the key factor in maintaining a good relationship. To be compassionate to other must be cultivated through fully understand it. Thus, to be compassionate in practice depends on oneself how to show his or her caring to others. It means she and her vihara' colleagues should be immensely warm and become a friendly person to non-vihara members. It is very useful for them to build network with other religious follower in that area.[6]

Here, the essential point of compassion within the Mahayana tradition have also outlined by Armstrong. She described the Mahayana who revere the Buddha as an eternal presence in the lives of the people and as an object of worship, have preserved other values that are just as strongly emphasized in the Pali texts, particularly the importance of compassion.[7] Whereas another essay explains the compassion could be outlined here under.

> Karuna or Compassion is considered by the Mahayana to be as important as Wisdom. They are the Supreme Combination. Compassion may be considered as feeling the sorrows of others as one's own with the wish that one could take them on to oneself to relieve that suffering in others. Skill in Means is the ability to use the appropriate means to help each individual case. It is a case of the end result justifying the means employed.[8]

Moreover, to understand the meaning of compassion is limitless. To compassionate other means to welcome other in any kind of situation. Preece have written on the limitless of compassion. According to him,

> We need a deep-rooted compassion for ourselves in order to allow for our fallibility and vulnerability on the path. There is little point in trying to base our lives on unreal ideals that only cripple us. My experience has led me to conclude that a fundamental aspect of the journey is the uncovering of our personal spiritual pathology and its gradual resolution. At each stage on the path, new aspects of pathology may emerge, and their resolution will enable us to move forward. Our willingness to learn and grow from this process is perhaps one of the most extraordinary qualities of our human nature. Considerable wisdom comes from our state of imperfection.[9]

In this sense, we should understand the very essential meaning in Preece' writing about compassion. He continued that compassion is also much linked with our acceptance. He reckons as follows:

> Compassion does not arise from ideals of perfection but from a recognition of and concern for our own fallibility. At the heart of our potential for health and wholeness is the need for a fundamental quality of acceptance, an unconditional compassionate presence. Without this capacity either for ourselves or for others, even our spirituality can become harsh and uncompromising.[10]

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6 An interviewh with Cik Amoy, Ibid.

7 Armstrong, Karen. *Buddha*. London: Penguin Books. 2004. p. 21

8 http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/maha2.htm, accessed 12 August, 2011.

9 Preece, Rob. *The Wisdom of Imperfection: The Challenge of Individuation in Buddhist Life*. Itacha, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2006. P. 14

10 Preece, Rob. Ibid. p. 57.

The people of Vihara Kwan In Thang in Pamulang, Banten have shown their compassionate to other people, especially for non vihara members. This doctrine made them able to contact to one another easily in the area. Their keeping in touch with another faith is not only shown by their caring to common people, but also their close relations with the local political leaders. Hence, they admitted that this way has been a very useful in doing service in the vihara, because the Muslim neighbor could also share their warm and respect to the Buddhist accordingly.

This feature will lead us to observe their method in conducting network with other faith. The following part is discussed about their service in the vihara that enables other religious people to attend the service.

The Vihara Services

Since the beginning, the elite vihara member has always been maintained a well relationship with other faith group, specifically for the people who resides around the vihara compound area. Again, it is the way to express the Buddha teaching on *welas asih* to all human being. To express love and compassion to other people, the local Buddhists have enormously been carried out a number social works that pretend to invite other people to attend.

The main social service that enables the vihara involving other people is food alms distribution. Annually, the vihara invites people from around the vihara compound area to attend this event which is taken place in the compound area of vihara. A thousand coupons distribute every year to the proper group of people whose economically are deprived. When they come to the vihara, they will have to show the coupon for being substituted by food offering package. The vihara people in collaboration with the local Muslim leader and local police officer are ready to distribute the food. Commonly, food alms is provided in one bag which consists mainly of cooking stuff such as rice, sugar, vegetable oil, and other similar thing.

In this year, the event was held in a time when the vihara people celebrated Ulambana festival, which was occurred during fasting month of Muslim concurrently. Ulambana is celebrated throughout the Mahayana tradition from the first to the fifteenth days of the eighth lunar month. It is believed that the gates of Hell are opened on the first day and the ghosts may visit the world for fifteen days. Food offerings are made during this time to relieve the sufferings of these ghosts. On the fifteenth day, Ulambana or Ancestor Day, people visit cemeteries to make offerings to the departed ancestors. Many Theravadins from Cambodia, Laos and Thailand also observe this festival.[11]

Therefore, food offering in Ulambana time along with time of Ramadhan is deemed a great advanced for the vihara people in sharing the food alms because their food offering will be distributed in appropriate time when Muslim facing Iedul Fitri festival. Fortunately, the foodstuff offering during Ramadhan time is a common feature in many part of Indonesia. No matter how and where food offering is distributed, crowd of people will always be featured. Perhaps, it is not merely the problem of religious virtue itself, but also the problem of poverty.

The vihara was used to serve a medical assistant for the people of vihara neighbor. But, now the medical service is no longer active because the doctor had moved to another place. Until

[11] http://www.buddhanet.net/festival.htm, accesed 10 October 2011.

now, there is no available doctor yet to be able to assist the program. And since the last 2 years, the program has been closed.

Building Mutual Understanding to Other Faith

Although it built inside of Muslim society, the vihara have never been threatened in terms of escalating a religious sentiment. Reportedly, even some Muslim students frequently visit the vihara. The uniqueness of Chinese culture and its mixed up with Buddhist doctrine have deemed as a spiritual way of living for the vihara people that need to be studied.

For example, another vihara board told me that the student from Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta have regularly visited the vihara for observing the building and the Buddha doctrines as well. They come to the vihara to seek any information about Buddhism and Chinese culture at the same time. The vihara board thinks it is a good thing to be exposed when people from non Buddhist could be able to study the Buddha teaching. In contrary, the Buddhist should also be able to study other religious teaching in order to get mutual understanding within a multicultural society.

The former of the head of Religious Affair of Banten once have said that the vihara board had shown their eager to develop a good relation with other faith group. Specifically, the representative of vihara has been participated in a new institution, namely *Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (FKUB, or Religious Harmony Forum) that facilitated by the local government. Moreover, its delegate has always come to attend the invitation which is sent by government. Since there are eight Buddhist school in Banten, the government has invoked a forum to accommodate each of school. And thus, the forum was established, namely *Forum Umat Buddha* (FUB, or Buddhists forum) where it secretariat is located in the vihara.

Then, what should be noted from the description above concerning about the vihara people and their effort in maintaining the vihara service. I think there are at least two points could be taken here. *Firstly*, it is true as what Imtiyaz Yusuf have written that historically, Islam and Buddhism have engaged in a religious interchange in the course of their encounters in Central, South and Southeast Asia. Their early encounters were followed, in some instances, by conversion of Buddhists to Islam as happened in Central and maritime Southeast Asia. Yet there were also other regions where Buddhism and Islam continued to exist side by side for long as happened in India and also mainland Southeast Asia.[12]

Secondly, from the political and sociological perspective, the way in which the vihara people engage them in social network in their area is somewhat linked with the civil society movement in Indonesia. Edward Aspinall has written about civil society organization in Indonesia. He described civil society as follows:

> In a civil society where actors moderate their most ambitious goal for remaking state and society and no longer view each other as their primary adversaries, by contrast, the political environment is likely to be more conducive to democracy. Key conditions for such

[12] Yusuf, Imtiyaz. *Dialogue Between Islam and Buddhism through the Concepts* Ummatan Wasatan *(The Middle Nation) and* Majjhima-Patipada *(The Middle Way*). Journal of Islamic Studies 48:3 (2009). p. 368.

> an outcome include minimal societal consensus about the desired nature of the societal and political order, and at least some civil society organizations that cut across, rather than reinforce, cleavages in society.[13]

In the case of Indonesia, Aspinall observed that in the 1990s, civil society became an arena where many groups attempted to expand space for political participation, constrain the state, and promote democratization.[14] By citing Aspinall, it can be found that the vihara people promote civil society movement, where they have been relentlessly active to build the political environment which is to be more conducive to democracy.

Conclusion

The current dynamics of Buddhism in Indonesia is not only marked by the establishing new monasteries, but also denoted by the forming of new Buddhist societies. In fact, the building of many monasteries (vihara) as a symbolical of the current development of Buddhism in Indonesia remains productive. One of these features is the establishment of Vihara Kwan In Thang which is located in Betawi Muslim community in Pamulang, Banten Province. This monastery was built in early 2000, and now is vigorously active in serving dhamma teaching and offer social aid. Until now, there have been no objections from their Muslim neighbor, especially when they are conducting services in the vihara.

The most obvious thing that can be learnt from this vihara is how the vihara people practicing the concept of welas asih (compassion) in their daily life. By spreading love and compassion to all human beings, anybody will attain self awareness and calm mind. And to express love and compassion to other people, the local Buddhists have enormously been carried out a number social works that pretend to invite other people to attend.

There are at least two main points here that can be taken from the vihara people in maintaining service inside Muslim society. *Firstly*, it is true that historically, Islam and Buddhism have engaged in a religious interchange in the course of their encounters in Central, South and Southeast Asia. *Secondly*, from the political and sociological perspective, the way in which the vihara people engage them in social network in their area is somewhat linked with the upholding civility in Indonesia.

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[13] Aspnall, Edward. *Indonesia; Transforming of Civil Society and Democratic Breakthrough*, in Alagappa, Muthiah (Ed.), *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia; Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2004. p. 62

[14] Aspinall. *Ibid*. p. 89.

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Buddhism in Indonesia: The Current Issues of Development of Buddhism and Modern Muslim

Edi Ramawijaya Putra, S. Pd[1]

Introduction:

This paper will elaborate and discuss the current development of Buddha as a formal religion in the ocean of multicultural and multi religion in Indonesia especially in relation to the development of modern Muslim existence. In fact, tough Buddhism is a minority from total number of community but its significant contribution for national development and local government have been formally admitted. Thus, the presence of Buddhist in the middle of arising democratic and political life in Indonesia must be noted as a successfulness of particular religion entering the certain worldly aspect. Technically, the existing of Buddha as religion rise both sides from those who seeing it as national achievement, and other side who deem it as imminent threat on their majority power. One of well noted and obvious evidence that we can see is the impacts of Buddhism towards Muslim development in Indonesia. Since Indonesia is a big Muslim country with great number of followers and almost 90 percent from the data of anthropological statistic and Buddhist must be able to contribute taking its roles in every aspects of life. The impacts can be observed from political point of view, socio-economic, culture and of course spiritual and religious aspects. Furthermore, the process of blend acculturation both between Buddhism and modern moeslem and among other religion spreads from cities to rural areas in the land where Buddhist exists. Second fold synthesis of this paper will elaborate some issues related to the current development of Buddhism as formal national religion struggle for its rights and freedom in term of being legitimate and treated as well as other major religion. After all, this paper will also discuss some important points that describing spiritual behavior of Buddhist that becomes a measurement for other religious followers. How is the perspective of other religious followers about current Buddhist development in Indonesia? And later, what are the factors that influence the development of Buddhist in Indonesia? , what are factors that block development of Buddhist? And what are attempts that possibly pop out? These are some questions that will be answered in this paper. The writer hope that this essence will benefits to other country where Buddhist spreads in new lands and enrich our knowledge in term of Buddhist development in Southeast Asia especially Indonesia.

I. Background

In the history of living religions, massive wars and chaos are frequenlty mentioned as an inner part of the development of the religious cummunity itself. Especially the war between Muslim community with yahudi and nasrani, several wars are still happening up to the present time altough in different face. Nevertheless, those wars are not rooted by religion but political interests

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and individual agressions who led the war seemingly rised upon religions. Acoording to Kasmuri[2], there are some factors caused the destructive harmony of modern religious society in this recent decades such as the rise of secularism, the rise of matrealism, and morality crisis and rise of fanatism.

The facts that modern world society has been influenced by such factors above shown by the new movements and lifestyes that are greatly formed the new way of performing their acts in every aspects of life. For instance, religion is not again revealing its follower as spiritual being instead of social status and formal identity. Much of he civil rights movement since half last this century had strong opposed into their integrity even among thier own mainstream or sects in a partucular religion, and we can imagine how is the fanatism rise up as a brand new ideology for religious life. These newest bulks occurs in alomsot all countries all over the world as zenith in the history of mankind and religion. These factors made religious life and inter-religious harmony between religion in one particluar country is totally different to one country to another.

In Indonesia, an outstanding portion had been providing by Indonesian government on creating the harmonious life of religions communities. It was well-noted in the history of Buddhism development when the Ffourth President of Republic Indonesia K.H. Abdurahman Wahid (Gusdur) declared the freedom for Chinese people to perform their cultures in every occasion freely. Of course it then brings a great movement of Buddhism to simultaneously develop under a perfect blend of Chinese cultures and their religion. The presidency statements on this portion generate variety of judgments from political and religious leaders in Indonesia. As a majority religion with total 87.21% followers from population, Islam is the most critical and sensitive. Tough, the life of religious and spiritual among communities is well maintained by the government but several frictions and chaos occurs under the name of particular religion.

Since 1967, that was an era of new order the government together with the elites and religions leaders have conducted many reconciliation. Central government with locals authorities have committed to prevent more friction among religions that will lead civilian conflict. Nevertheless, such reconciliation is merely assembled from elites to elites instead of accommodating "the grass root". It effects the dynamicity of harmonic life occurs only in civic level not theological level. Although Indonesia is a strong in maintaining commitment of performing religious teachings in practice it is not unlikely that each religion might undergo lead conflicts. The *pseudo-harmonic* on religious life is frequently colored by instability competition among religions and religious leaders. These competition and rivalry rise disintegrated relationship among religions.

It is admitted that Buddhism in Indonesia has been growing fast and flourishing. It indicates by there are many "vihara" (name of Buddhist's place to pray) built in almost all provinces with the number of Buddhists raised day by day. In the societal level, practically Buddhist is free to perform their rituals without any meaningful disturbances from other majority religion. Unlike above, in political aspect the reality there still embedded by the numbers of dicriminations and abusment. It is presumably that the mojority think deep about some remarkable signs of improvement of buddhist in the land. The progress of buddhist in its quantity aspects was considered to attack the majority exsistence especially in winnig out the attarction toward indigenous population. This rapid and reflective reaction must be anticipated by buddhist as a new paradigm to reform the strategy to strengthen the bergainning power in sense of being minority. It will be very beneficial

[2] Kasmuri. Pluralisme dalam perspektif Islam. Jurnal Pemikiran Islam. Vol. V. No. 1. Juli-Desember 2008. Al-Araf. IAIN Surakarta.

that when exsistence of religion as formal and legitimated construction their popularity identified the imminient external threats that oncoming forward. I do hope that the following discussion would meet the substantial of what am trying to eleborate in this paper.

II. Discussion

2.1. Buddhism in Indonesia; Developed or Failed?

I did for purpose to quote this idea in the beginning of my paper in order to guide readers understanding the most updated issues about Buddhism development in Indonesia?. The only purpose of putting the question above is related to some scholars' claims that Buddhism in Indonesia had successfully widespread while in contrast, to other Buddhist intellectuals it considerably failed!. Having this introduction I do hope that the readers can easily argue on the following discussions on this paper and also put your positioning based on the Buddhism development in your own land.

The successfulness of a particular religion in the context of its presence in a freedom country cannot be seen from the quantity of its followers but its quality in penetrating and affecting every aspects of life. In my opinion, those aspects are the prominent factors of humanity primary dimensions such as socio-economic, politic, culture, science/technology and education, security and prosperity. These factors are the elements to bring "a religion" as religion that can be simultaneously run for the sake of creating the true religious communities.

It is not to assess Buddhism successfulness or failures in Indonesia. But in fact the objective introspections are really important to get Buddhism more and more engaged to the recent world context. In Indonesia, Buddhism seems to be not "popular" to another religions comparing to Christian or Hindu. Therefore, it is difficult to judge that Buddhism has engaged in Indonesia. This situation is supported by the data of the number of Buddhist who conversed to other religions such as Islam or Christianity. Up to now, it is very hard to determine the causes of the conversions. Is this caused by the strong approaches missionary of Christianity? Who had became most dominant global religious structure, or the effects of the movement of new *"Islamization"* method or other outside power but it's simply drawn that even Buddhism is not popular among Buddhist, isn't it so ironic?.

In line with above, Heine & Prebish[3] said on their book Buddhism in *The Modern World that Buddhism* is a religion and as a religion Buddhism must be able to play its major roles on the ongoing attempts to preserve traditional teaching and modes of practice to the needs of adaptation of changing social and cultural conditions. Of course it is not equal to compare the context of Buddhism in Buddhist countries like Thailand, Myanmar, Japan and other Asian countries who allocated Buddhism to be it identity of life. But, again I emphasized that even that vast majority of Islam today in Indonesia grew and developed "little by little" from its transformation and regeneration form "Prophet's teaching" to "religion that must be practiced and applied". Learn from this phenomenon, we should see the "light" to reflect and "modeling" of how the traditional Muslim remains more and more people in Indonesia. It is not "Mission Impossible" to return the golden era of *Majapahit* Kingdom and *Sriwijaya* Empire if we intend to because Indonesia "was" a Buddhist country No doubt!. Regardless on viewing of Indonesian religious civilian's right to perform their

[3] Steven Heine & Charles S. Prebish. Buddhism in The Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition. Oxford University Press. Okford. UK

sermons and spiritual practices, some Indonesian also had doubted whether Buddhism was totally engaged or not? Even within the Buddhist itself. Willis[4] in her paper stated that "are we socially engaged" means questioning us whether Buddhist is truly essential in social life. As the matter of fact, the mainstream Buddhist teaching need to work more intensively and collectively in order to be more fully socially engaged. In other words, Buddhism have not yet established collective and massive root to transform the society which will endure to sustain their life as a social human being. Buddhism in Indonesian political perspective still far from us called as responsive and participative.

2.2. The Issues on Religious Life in Indonesia

Transformation of moderate and conservative traditional Muslim community must be addressed as one important point to modify Buddhist's strategy to stand as a religion with remarkable followers. The inclination of total behaviors within Muslim community had shifted to be more and more inclusive and tolerant toward another religion. It is people called as "modern Islamic community" that moves from awareness to meet the challenge of the futuristic and contemporary religion rather than just struggling on the concept of textual holy book. What can be inferred when the word "Islam" listens and "modern"? Or let's say what the correlations between the two are? In fact, the radicalisms movement that represented by the movement of "Jihad" and other Islamic organizations had shown that the mainstream of Islam itself against modernization. The issues of modern world that primarily indicated by the existence of "west" and western countries are totally ruined the idea of basic Islam teaching. Their opposes and defenses to the westernization represent the inconsistency of the new face of today's Muslim community itself. To the present time I am writing this paper there still many cases like suicide bombs, terrorist, separatism under the name of Islam. Practically, it then changes the way people seeing Islam as "red line" religion which is loaded by sadism, dangerous and apriority. Perhaps, it may be assumed that the community and the teaching would be somewhat different so we cannot directly judge that the radicals is not as same the basic Islam that forwarding peace and stability.

Gradually, the contestation of religious life among religions followers is established more and more for the last twenty years in Indonesia. In contrast, for some analysts on religion, they agreed that the religious dialogue, conferences and interfaith reconciliations must be established in order to prevent the horizontal conflicts and chaos under the name of religion. Indonesian has experience too much bed scratches on the story of religious conflicts such as in Ambon, Poso, Sampit and other cities. These conflicts killed many people and remains deep trauma for the left family. It is supported by the Chairman of Center of Asian Studies (CENAS)[5] Zaenal Abidin Ekoputro's[6] statement who states that:

> "…in Indonesia has actually been increased and as a result, many communal conflicts exist in some areas…Tough, some other observers reject the religion as the main root cause of the communal conflict…"

[4] Willis Rengganiasih Endah Ekowati. Are we socially engaged?: A preliminary study on the modes of teachings and practices of the Theravadins in Indonesia. Conference Volume. ATBU Meetings. 2009 Myanmar. Burma.

[5] Zaenal Abidin Ekoputro is an activist and chancellor of CENAS

[6] CENAS is an abbreviation of Centre of Asian Studies it is an independent association that aims to deepen the understanding of multiculturalism and diversity in Asia. CENAS was established in October 2006 and invited to be a participant in the Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue held at Rajabaht University by International Network of Engage Buddhism (INEB) that has its head secretariat in Bangkok.

In other word, Indonesian has not completed yet learning to be multicultural country. Although, in the surface Indonesia perform as an archipelago land consists of thousands of customs, languages, tribes, arts and so forth but the mainstream religion can be a potential flare that can explode anytime with no wonder.

The Ministry of Religion is the government office who has its main function to maintain the harmonious life of religious communities in Indonesia. The primary roles of this department are to give religious civil services and to preserve the coexistence among religious communities all over Indonesia. One of the policies to absurd and to accommodate in the level of elite religious leaders' dialogue is by facilitating the equal right for every religion to establish their representative councils[7]. In the era of Minister Mr. Tarmizi Taher in 1997 the effort of making strong integrity had been made. This

2.3. The Radicalist Movements

One of the evidence on the perspective of sociological point of view dealing with Islam reaction to the increase of other religions is the appearance of Islamic Radicalism movements. It is hard to be admitted that even some radicalism movements raise their fundamental Islamic virtues as their argument, but it is simplicity of frame in which they feel uncomfortable towards other religions development in both qualitative and quantitative. Guerin[8] on his reports in Southeast Asia Journal wrote that the extremists are not acting under the blessing of the NU[9], the Muhamaddiyah or the government of Indonesia. With their actions they not only threaten the image of Islam but also pose a danger to the preservation of Indonesia as a secular state governed (more or less) in line with the all-inclusive and tolerant Pancasila ideology.

Though ex-president Megawati has been able since September 11, 2001, to juggle support for the US-led global "war" on terrorism and the sensitivities of the Muslim majority in Indonesia, this was largely due to senior officers in the Indonesian military (TNI) holding fast to their predominantly moderate and secular views so as to avoid alienating the wider Muslim community. But now the new military paradigm, and the consequent "hardline" stance on any protests or disturbances that threaten security or stability, may encourage once again the use of excessive force in controlling anti-US sentiment. If US President George W Bush goes ahead and bombs Iraq, the situation on the ground in Indonesia could deteriorate very quickly and Americans may have to be withdrawn to safety. Suharto, like his predecessor Sukarno, feared that fundamentalist Islamic elements, the "extreme" right, posed as much of a threat to the unity and security of the state as the communists, the "extreme" left. Unrestrained Islam was not something Suharto and the military would ever allow. Later, Abdurrahman Wahid tried hard to move toward separating religion from the state but found that Islam is too embedded in Indonesian culture to be taken out of politics. Mainstream Indonesian Muslims also fear a new secular Indonesia that would take away the right

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7 Religious councils for each religion in Indonesia are; (1) The council of Indonesia Ulama (MUI: Majelis Ulama Indonesia) delegating Muslim community, (2) The Churches Alliance in Indonesia (PGI) delegating protestant community, (3) The conference of Indonesia Bishops (KWI: KOnferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia) delegating roman Catholics, (4) The council of Indonesian Hindu (PHDI: Parisadha Hindu Dharma Indonesia) delegating Hindu community, (5) The council of Buddhist Trusteeship (WALUBI: Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia)

8 Bill Guerin. (is a writer of the journal on Southeeast Asia) http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/DJ09Ae01.html

9 NU is an Islamic traditional organisation represent the very old teaching and concervative moselem in Indonesia.

of their religion to be afforded state protection. Al-Habib and his radical Islamic FPI, on the other hand, which wishes to see Indonesia become an Islamic state and is most keen on taking the law into its own hands to protect Muslim "values", represent a clear and present danger to Indonesia. The agenda is clear. Two months after Megawati was sworn in as president last year, Al-Habib was interviewed by a local media consultancy firm and had this to say: "When a policy is issued to castrate the rights of FPI, or oppress Muslim people, we will fight. So, we warn the government not to try to oppress Muslims. As long as they do not, FPI will have no reasons to act. But if the government acts against Muslims, then we will take real action! So, we will watch the behavior of the government. You can say that FPI is practicing social control towards Megawati's government and the policies it makes. So we would like to warn the present government under Megawati: Don't mess with Muslim people or try to oppress them! We will be watching! This is a warning!" Though the FPI thugs have waged a relentless campaign of destruction of property owned by those they say are sinners, to the radicals the sin of the president is just that of being born a woman. Al-Habib has said FPI will not recognize a female president and, according to him, under shariah a woman cannot be president. The continued violence and unrest in the regions, economic turmoil and the scrabble for political clout before the elections in 2004, as well as the general lawlessness, all creates a ripe battlefield for those who abuse the law and openly defy the authorities in the name of Islam. There is little of more fundamental importance to Indonesia than the attainment of religious harmony in these multiracial, secular states, whose people find their spiritual strength in various religions and live amid such a diverse cultural tradition. Religious sensitivities, more often than not, have created havoc in the community. Religious and sectarian killings in Ambon and the rest of the Spice Islands have claimed many hundreds of lives. Islam is a religion of love and peace, and those who resort to destruction and violence are blackening its image and discrediting its message. The FPI, however, portrays the religion as a violent and fierce creed, and demonstrations and violent behavior only tarnish the image of Islam. Confiscating beer and spirits, smashing nightclub signs, windows, and security posts, accosting people, shaving the heads of women, and other acts of intimidation have nothing in common with believers of any faith. The demonstrators say they are acting on behalf of Islam, so it is fair to ask how they interpret the Islamic religion, which teaches the virtues of wisdom, patience and mutual respect, by showing their disrespect for the law and for the authorities. They want to show their antipathy toward immoral activities, but they fail to convince that they are of high morals themselves, or that they have any respect for the law. Further adverse publicity and any perception of unrestrained Islamism of the sort Suharto so carefully caged will set Indonesia even farther back on the road to economic recovery. Continued weakness in law enforcement against Muslims who are committing such offenses threatens the growth of even more Islamic extremism and even a potential economic collapse that would destabilize the entire region.

2.4. Muslim Community in Indonesia; Their Reaction to Other Religions

This part of paper will elaborate the segment of socio-political change of modern Muslim community and their reactions to other religious communities. As such context, I believe that the modern Muslim appeared to have become the important element in order to having Buddhist community's position for the matter of freedom in Indonesian nationalism and Buddhist missionary itself.

The movement of modern Muslim community was pioneered by Muslim intellectuals and academicians. They attempt to reconcile the virtues of Islamic views with the needs of the modern world. These modern forces were raised up the issues of inducing the awakening Muslim community in Indonesia aware that their political right to uphold their religious supremacy and fight against backward nesses. Consequently, as being well-organized and well-doctrinized this modern movement rapidly become a force behind Islamic society.

The only one well-noted phenomena for the matter of modernist Islamic movement represent by the appearance of Muhamadiyah[10] movement. This modernist Islamic organization established in November 1912 up to the end of the Dutch colonial rule in 1942. As an modernist forces, this organization aiming at purifying Islamic faith by removing superstitious practices and traditional admixtures. As I quoted in Alfian[11] thesis in term of reformist "Muhamadiyah has three interrelated roles, namely (1) as a religious reformist, (2) as an agent of social change, and (3) as political force". These objectives indicate that the modern Muslim movement view the Islamic teaching as both contextual and philosophical. Or simply, they strongly believe that the interpretation of holy books (Al-Quran and Prophet's sayings) must be codified to get the meaning that faith in such position could always meet the demands of the continual changing of world. I assume that the modern movement of engage Muslim movements all over the world originated from this belief and later for this purpose they create the new system by initiating social welfare, education and slowly eliminating Islamic miss-interpretation such as militancy and "Jihad" propagation.

Having this successful transformation of frame of traditional Islamic to be more applicable one and next question is how are the reactions of more and more Buddhist and other religions development in Indonesia?. In my opinion, whatever the Islamic modernist understanding it be but the perspective in term of get more and more religious expansion is still there, regardless from their basic concept of tolerance and inclusivity. In facts, the hidden agenda of "Islamization" and tendency to put Islamic teaching (shariat Islam) as superior in nation is still exists. In the following era, this modern movement develops as a political motor to assemble power from root up to elites. The presence of PAN which is led by Mr. Amien Rais is one of the examples of successful revitalize the function of religion as a powerful element to winning the bargaining power. From this point, Islam claim that within Islam the spirit of utilizing the concept of faith must be contextualized with present necessities such as politic and social change. The modernist firmly declare that they do not split between the faith and politic. I was surprised (as a Buddhist) found the article written by Islam scholar named Natsir stated his argument on Snouck Hurgrojne's thesis by saying:

Every command of Islam with regard to Ibadat (Ubudijah matters) is also related to and bound by earthly matters. Here lies the difference between Islam and other religions[12] .

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[10] Muhamadiyah is an Islam sect These groups share a literal interpretation of Islam and claim that Muslims should practice only "pure" Islam as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, or *Salaf.* They can thus be included among Salafi activist movements that attack discotheques and other "places of violence." They also take a militant view of *jihad* as "holy war" against perceived enemies of Islam rather than the mainstream view of *jihad* as meaning "exerting oneself to the utmost" in Muslim activities, with war as a last resort.

[11] Alfian. Muhamadiyah The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization Under Dutch Colonialism. Gadjah Mada University Press. 1989.

[12] Natsir, "oleh-oleh dari Algires" in his capita selecta. Vol. 1 Op cit, pp 164-65. This article first appeared in Pandji Islam, July 1939.

2.5. Impacts of Buddhism in Modern Muslim Communities

In the sense of political issues and ideological areas Buddhism does not contribute too much instead of the power of majority “Islam”. Tough some Buddhist figures are voted to be parliament members in central legislative (DPR-RI) or local legislative (DPRD), minister in the leading cabinet (Kwik Kian Gie in the era of President Megawati) and other small local politic leaders but it cannot be said or directly assumed as Buddhistic successfulness in political. It is not because those figures depart from its individual affiliation on particular parties and politics leaders instead of saying it as Buddhism political power. I mention this things because I want to describe the performance of Buddhism in Indonesia in sort of the context that Buddhism might be politically not engaged!

In line with introduction above, I rather interested to describe the emergence local contexts of Buddhist people who love in remote and rural areas in Indonesia in which this element perhaps explain the idea of how Buddhism had been affecting modern Muslim communities. The unique of Islamic penetration in Indonesia is the most successful one to somehow I can said it it is as same as in the Middle East. Professor of state Islam university Azumardi Azra said that: “it is simplistic” to think that Indonesia Islam as the same as Islam in the Middle East”[13]. It can be observed from its peaceful penetration over regions and villages all over Indonesia by integrating and accommodating local beliefs and customs. The agreement of conventional “chemistry” among traditional Indonesian communities and the virtues of Islam generate Indonesia Islam to be more inclusive, tolerant and valid in the frame of democracy.

The most important and significant issues that are needed to be highlighted are not on seeing the position of Buddhism as a formal religion among other beliefs but in how would Buddhism is interpreted by other religious communities especially Muslim communities. The most challenging is the interpretation of others’ perspective on “our: movement as missionary religion. The issue of pluralism, multicultural, multi religion and another thing that related to variety of difference within the society is not the point. Civil society have been much educated and understood on their way of being democratized, they become more inclusive and appreciating any differences as “well-painted” art in the wall of united Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, I really want to strengthen that the battle within Indonesian Buddhist and Buddhist leaders are the things needed to be transformed and refined.

In this sense I do believe that due to the multi crisis such as morality crisis, trusty crisis, leadership crisis and other dimension crisis Buddhism can be a reflection and solution to overcome nation’s problems. Indeed, in this sense I also believe that the presence of Buddhist would have more and more place in the existence of religious life in Indonesia.

The Chairwoman of Indonesian Buddhist Representative (abbreviated: WALUBI) S. Hartati Murdaya[14] on her speech in the forum of Trusty Dialogue, Reality of Citizenship and Drefting The Agenda of Religion Fellowship stated that the recent condition of Indonesian on whatsoever sadness or backwardness need religious communities that live in the country must stick together and peacefully talk on each religous values and virtues finding the solution through reconciliation among religion along with its leaders. She also added that even Buddhist in the minority it does not mean that we would participate minimally but Buddhist will give their best contribution for the sake of lifting this country to be more prosperous and stood up as a freedom land to the world.

[13] Azumardi Azra is a professor of UIN Syarif Hidayatuallah Jakarta

[14] S. Hartati Murdaya is a Chairwomen of WALUBI

2.6. The Plurasim Perspective in Islamic View

The frame of thinking to the concept of multicultural in Indonesia have not found its "blueprint". It causes several miss-understanding and miss-conception among civic levels about the application and implementation of the concept "multi" in the huge ocean of "culture". The scope of multi culture in indonesia still purely related to the culture only instead of teological and spiritual equality. The spirit of inclusivity, moderate and multicultural depart from ideas of ethnical identity but when it delas with teological and doctrinal that multi concept is gradually decreased.

Moreover, political learning was not sufficient to create a better society to clarify its differences are belong to the single unity in the boundary of nation. Later on, this incomplete ideology derive someone to be more exsclusive, individualistic and radical. The radical exstreme, subjective fundamental and literalistic are factors that enhance "blind-fanatism". For some people who had completely distracted by this mandset they tend to neglect the value of communal exclusivity and inclusivity, otherwise the core of absulotism of all religion teaching is being ignored.

It is necessary to clarify the view of Islam in term of the acceptance about pluralism particularly its view on the co-existence of other religion in indonesia. Conceptually, Islam is fully aware that within society there are some different groups to its part such as economy, ideology, ethnical background and faith. It is noted in the holy Al-Quran that it has been becoming a *"sunnatullah"* (it is a must) people differ to one another, including their religions. The significance of Islamic looks on pluralism is supported by living wisdom that lives among grass root Muslim who says that *"ukhuwah insaniyyah basyariah"* which is literally means finding the truth is a part of appreciating the differences and spirit of harmony entire religions. According to Kasmuri[15] the reluctance on pluralism means non-acceptence of "sunnatullah". He also added that Allah (Almighty God) had its particular goal in creating a harmonic life of mankind. Certainly, if mu'min (Islamic people) who understand this consistently it will help them to live more happily and peacefully and little by little decrease their fanatism that was blinfolded by incomplete ideology since all religion teach the same virtue that tehy called "fitrah".

III. Conclusion

The contribution of buddhism the believer had been remarkable noted by the government of indonesia. The fact that buddhism along with its follower and religious leader had been successfully shown thier role to be formal and legitime religion. The context of multi culture and multi religion in the ocean of diversity make such development raise various perspective especially for the majority religion. Their reaction is politically and socially influenced the position of buddhism who have just begun to clarify its function to be more engaged in every aspects of life. The reaction also coming from the modern Muslim community who procalim that the Islam basic teching must be carried out in the term of worldy matter rather than just purely textuals. It generates the portion that buddhist must see this as new fresh air to reform the strategy, approaches and method in order to be accpetable in a new land and meanwhile eliminate ay destrcutive friction among religious community all over the world.

[15] Kasmuri. Al-Araf Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat. Vol. V. No. 1 Juli-Desember. 2008. Pluralisme dalam perspektif Islam. STAIN Surakarta. Solo. Jawa tengah P. 8-9

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The Social Role of Chanting Tradition in Indonesia Buddhist Society

Ms. Yulianti[1]

Devotion is one of essential factors in Buddhism. Although devotion in Buddhism is not similar in meaning to common devotion, such as devotion to spirit, god, and other powerful beings; but Buddhists widely practice the act of devotion. Peter Harvey defines devotion for Buddhist as an act of expressing one's faith (saddha) towards the Buddha and His teaching. (170) He emphasizes that in Buddhism the presence of Saddha (faith or trustful confidence) must be balanced with wisdom (panna). This is in order for one not to blindly believe in anything but to first check and analyze the teaching of the Buddha.

Practices of devotion commonly found in both traditions of Buddhism, Mahayana and Theravada. The places where people conduct devotional acts may be vary, from their own house to temple or even wherever they find object they revere. One of the most common objects that people show their devotion to is that the Buddha image. In many of Buddhists' houses, there are little shrine in which they perform ritual every morning and evening. During the performance of ritual most of Buddhists engage in various symbolic bodily actions, such as offering candles, incense, flowers, bowing, and chanting which to them would increase and support the meditative mind.

Among those devotional actions, chanting is to be one of pivotal aspects in Buddhism. Harvey defines chanting as relatively common vehicle for devotion or other ceremonial acts. (175) Chanting is also mentioned to aid accurate memory of the teaching of the Buddha, as it is recited in tune that brings the mind to flow on from words to word. In the ancient time, when civilization had not accustomed to writing, chanting was being used to memorize the sutta and became public medium.

While Mahayana Buddhism mostly chants in Sanskrit language, Theravada uses pali language in their chanting. Harvey says using the ancient form of language may add some sacred atmosphere to the action. The benefit of chanting itself believed to be great that it generates positive energy such as joy and calm. Such benefit also transmitted to the listeners. In relation to that, monks and nuns are mostly the most trusted persons to perform chanting in the present of lay devotees.

Nevertheless, the chanting in Buddhism cannot be equaled to prayer. Unlike in other tradition in which devotion is offered to higher power or higher being, Buddhism chanting is mostly only form of recollection of good qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha. In short, chanting in Buddhism is not considered to a form of prayer. Ven Dhammasami mentions in his short article, The practice of Chanting in Buddhism, that Buddhism chanting tradition is not a way to ask someone to save him from evil and danger nor one hoping to be given a position in celestial realm. He clearly agrees that chanting is one of the ways for the purpose of learning, teaching, philosophizing, or re-memorizing the discourse of the Buddha.

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Furthermore, Venerable Dhammasami implies the tradition of reciting the sutta have been carried on since the ancient time of Buddha Era. In one of the Sutta called Dhammavihari Sutta mentions that there are several categories of people who do the chanting. The first one is called *pariyatti bahulo*, one who only keen on studying the *sutta*; secondly, *pariyatti bahulo*, one who only keen in preaching but effortless in practice; thirdly, *vitakka bahulo*, one whose interest is only on philosophizing the discourse; fourthly, *Sajjahayaka-bahulo*, one who enthusiastically memorizing and chanting the discourse, occasionally expecting osme magical power from the chanting. Lastly, *Dhammavihari*, one who does both chanting and practicing the dhamma. Under this categorization, we actually can see that the tradition of chanting has been appeared and practiced even during the Buddha's time or at least that the Buddha had anticipated the occurrence of such phenomenon.

Although chanting tradition in Buddhism is not identical to prayer, Buddhist chanting appears to be used for several different purposes. This is indicated by the various sutta in which practice is chanted on different occasions. One of them is such as Ratana Sutta which nature of the discourse is healing and protection, and there are still many others. Such pattern is very common in Theravada Buddhism, it spreads to most of countries in which Theravada Buddhism is being practiced. This is including Buddhists in Indonesia where Theravada Buddhism flourish and observed by many.

This paper will elaborate the practice of Buddhist chanting in Indonesia, especially which is done within Theravada tradition. Later, the research will also show how chanting serves not only religious purposes but also as a mean to strengthen the social bond between Buddhists particularly in a country where Buddhism is not the predominant religion.

Theravada Buddhist Chanting Tradition in Indonesia

The discussion on the Theravada Chanting Tradition can bring one to go back to as far to much early time of development of Buddhism in Indonesia. After the fall of Majapahit kingdom, Buddhism an institutionalized religion came to its disappearance. During that interval, Buddhism was only alive traditionally, lived in the heart of the people as some kind of heritage handed down from generation to generation quietly. It appeared that although Buddhist practices were not overtly implemented but the belief on Buddhism was still taken its root among Indonesian and blended in local cultures. (Rasyid, 1)

In the second arrival in Indonesia, the group of Theosophists brought Buddhism back into existence. Since then various Buddhist organizations had been established. The first Buddhist organization was called Java Buddhist Association that is said to be part of "The International Buddhist Missionary" which central was in Thaton, Myanmar. However, due to the heightened political cohesion in Indonesia, i.e. due to Japanese colonialization in Indonesia, most of Buddhist organizations were called in to termination. Nevertheless, when Japanese authority upon Indonesia came to an end, Buddhist organizations, for the second time, started mushrooming in the country. Among many organizations, Gabungan Tri Dharma Indonesia (GTI)—Association of Indonesia Tri Dharma-- and Perhimpunan Buddhis Indonesia (PERBUDHI)—Association of Indonesia Buddhists-- and Buddhis Indonesia –Buddhists Indonesia Organization-- were among the prominent.

As Buddhism gained its popularity, the discussion over serious issues pertaining way of practice of Buddhism was called into present. It was on May 20-22nd, 1967 that a grand meeting called Musyawarah Besar I Federasi Umat Buddha Indonesia was hailed. One of the declarations of the grand meeting was that every religious ritual, referring to Theravada Buddhism, must at the very least use paritta (in pali language). Thus for the first time in Indonesia, the term paritta was coined and the usage was formally acknowledged widely since then.

Today, Indonesia is the home of approximately two millions Buddhists from total number of population of Indonesia. The two Buddhist traditions, Mahayana and Theravada share the number of follower almost equally. They both spread nationally across the country sporadically. However, the spread of Theravada Buddhism appears to have set its influence as both in cities and rural areas.

Paritta Chanting in Indonesia

Speaking about Theravada Buddhism in Indonesia, the first thing for one to acknowledge is that there are many different organizations under which some Buddhist prefer to join with. To mention just a few of them, there are STI (Sangha Theravada Indonesia), WALUBI (Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia), and MBI (majelis Buddhayana Indonesia). However, since this paper is designed as an introductory purpose, I would like to specially study the chanting tradition observed by the group that is under the umbrella of Sangha Theravada Indonesia (STI).

Like any other Theravada Buddhist organization in Indonesia, STI also calls the collection of chanted sutra as Paritta with occasionally refers it as Palivacana. In 1983, the first copy paritta (of STI) edition was published and soon widely used by Buddhists in Indonesia. The content comprises numerous numbers of suttas and gathas. These *gathas* and *suttas* are organized in such way in order to meet different occasions for which recitation is dedicated to.

The chanting of paritta within Theravada context in Indonesia is basically classified into several occasions. The first category is when paritta are chanted on the ceremonial event that is to mark significant domestic events such as to mark 7th month of women pregnancy, birth, birthday, hair cutting ceremony, house blessing, blessing for the sick, planting/harvest seasons, taking oath for newly appointed authority, marriage, death and death anniversary.

The second category is called as guide to *Puja Bhakti*. Puja Bhakti is a term used to imply to a series of ritual involving all devotional manners. This is the most common form that is practiced by most of Buddhists. Normally, Buddhists in Indonesia do *puja bhakti* as routine ritual in their daily life both individually and communally. The *paritta* chants for this occasion starts with *Namakhara Patha* (homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha) and then ended with *ettavatadipatidana*.

The third section is *paritta* chants for the purpose of giving blessing *(Mangala patha)*. For this kind of ceremonial chanting, there are numerous *parittas* being read. Among them there are some significant *parittas* as follow: mangala sutta, ratana sutta, sumanggala gatha I & II, etc. [2] These

[2] Complete enumeration of the number of paritta chanting during Mangala ceremony are as follow: *Devata-aradana, vandana, saranagamana patha, namakarasiddhi gatha, saccakiriya gatha, mahakarunikonathotiadi gatha, namokaratthaka gatha, mangala sutta, ratana sutta, karaniyametta sutta, khandha paritta, vattaka paritta, Buddhanussati, Dhammanussati, sanghanussati, angulimala paritta, bojjhanga paritta, atanatiya paritta, Abhaya paritta, Dhajagga paritta, mora paritta, Devatauyyojana gatha, sakkatvatiadi gatha, mahajayamangala gatha, Buddhajamangala gatha, jaya paritta, sabbaro-*

parittas are read during special happy occasions such as birth, birthday, house blessing, taking oath, marriage, etc. The chanting of those *gathas* and *paritta* is for the purpose invoking more blessings and positive energy for the concerned people to whom the chanting is directed.

The next classification is *paritta* for *Avamangala* ceremony (obituary events). In Indonesia, obituary involves a series of ceremonial event. This starts from the time of funeral, and then continue to several more times, that are three days after the passing away of the person, seventh day, fortieth day, hundredth day, thousandth day and yearly anniversary in memory of the deceased. Unlike the paritta for *Mangala* ceremonial, the recitation of *paritta* Avamangala is to pour in blessing and thus may condition the deceased to reach a happy state of afterlife. These rituals are usually being performed in the house of the deceased family. Other Buddhists and encounters would come together on an appointed time to perform chanting together. In the case of Indonesia, the ritual may or may not be done in the presence of monks and nuns. In case there is no monk or nun could present in the event, laymen and laywomen may proceed to lead the chanting.[3]

Besides the above-mentioned occasions, there are also several special occasions in which paritta chanting are done collectively. (STI, xxvi) These are when on the occasions of Asalha Puja day[4], Magha Puja Day[5], Vesak Day[6], Atthami Vesak Day[7]. Especially for these gathas and parittas, the recitations are collectively done in the form of congregation in a vihara. As this is to mark important Buddhist events, a monk usually leads the chanting.

Moreover, within Indonesia context, chanting is one of essential aspects that encircle Buddhists religious life. Besides, communal activities done by member of community also plays important role even in religious activities, including within Buddhist community. As it is mentioned previously, that monks and nuns living in the monastery consider chanting as part of their daily routine. Although there is no such actual rule says that chanting must be done collectively but it is the most common thing especially where monks, nuns, and novice (*samanera)* stay at a monastery together.

To emphasize, although there is chanting, which is held communally, but In Indonesia individual chanting is also common. The later is very reasonable since Buddhist in Indonesia could hardly stay in one place as community with the exception when there is special occasion or big days in Buddhism. However, in some places—rarely though-- where Buddhists concentrate in one place, Buddhists has communal chanting program. One of the unique activities that Buddhists make is they conduct an activity called *Anjangsana* which refers to Buddhist regular social gathering and communal chanting at one of their fellow Buddhist's house.

Thus for these reasons, we can draw some important facts that Buddhist chanting is a form of daily routine for those who want to practice it. Although we can see that this practice may become the tenet in Buddhism, but it is distinctly flexible, as there is no such obligation to do it nor that the practitioner must do it communally.

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gatiadi gatha, samannanumodana gatha, Aggappasada sutta gatha, Bhojanaumodana gatha, So atthaladdhotiadi gatha, Culamangalacakkavala gatha, Ratanattayanubhavenatiadi gatha, Sumangala gatha I, sumanggala gatha II, pattidana.

[3] Name of parittas chanting for obituary ceremony are *vandana, saranagamana patha, pabbatopama gatha, ariyadhana gatha, Dhammaniyama Gatha, Tilakkhanadi Gatha, Pamsukula Gatha, Adiyasutta Gatha, Catutirokuddakanda Gatha, Ettavatatipattidana. (*STI, 2005: xxvi) ;

[4] Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Asalhapunnamipuja Katha

[5] Ovadapatimokkhapatha, Maghapunnamipuja Katha

[6] Bala Sutta, Saraniyadhamma Sutta, Visakhapunnamipuha Katha

[7] Dhammaniyama Sutta

Communal Chanting by Buddhist lay people in Indonesia

As it has been described in the earlier section that chanting is one of the most common practice among the Indonesian Buddhist. However, one of the most uniquely practiced is communal chanting which takes place in the house of the Buddhist. This practice is particularly widely practice among Theravadin community spread ranging from country to town. Never-the-less, in this occasion I would like to take a study case in which place the Buddhist practices this sort of communal practice. This example expects to deliver a message that the tradition of communal practice has some reasons become a social phenomena among Buddhist, especially how it works to bound the scattered Buddhists into one solid Buddhist community. In order to make my point clearer, I would like to draw one example of a small village in which area Buddhist social gathering is regularly undergone.

Ngandat is a name of a village in which about 300 of Buddhists live. In this village, there is also a vihara called Padepokan Dhammadipa Arama in which live a number or Buddhist monks, student novices, and *atthasilani* (a sort of Buddhist nun but keeping 8 precepts). Vihara (Buddhist monastery) functions as a central of Buddhists activities for Buddhists live nearby as well as for Buddhists in East Jawa in general. In fact, the monastery is one of the largest Buddhist monasteries in Indonesia whose role was significant for the early development of Buddhism in Indonesia.

Buddhists lay people live around the monastery are regularly holding chanting every weekend. However, a part from that schedule of chanting held in the monastery, the people also form another gathering in which day they do chanting together at their fellow Buddhists' home. Chanting is done once in a week every Wednesday evening. The chanting in this context is a form of Buddhists regular social gathering in which occasion Buddhists in the area get together and do activities together. The chanting usually take about just a half an hour but the actually gathering would take up to an hour and a half of time that is starting from 6.30 PM up till 8.00PM. For this program they call it as *Reboan,* refers to activity, which is done on Wednesday.

The Buddhists who frequently come to this occasion usually around 30 people, female and male, young and elders (I myself have decided to joint this group recenty and be part of the community). As I observe the program, it is actually consisting of not only chanting but also several others. At least, there are three main agenda in this program, i.e. Chanting*, Arisan*[8]*, Tabungan simpan pinjam* [9]. These agendas are made with the purpose to make the activity livelier and most of all to strengthened the bond among every member.

According to the people engage in the activity, the communal chanting in the village has started since about 7 years ago. The idea came when the Buddhist villager became aware there are actually many Buddhists live in their place. At the first hand, most of the Buddhists agree that the communal chanting has successfully overcome the feeling of aloneness for being a Buddhist in the place where most of the people were of other different religion, Muslim as mostly.

Arisan and *Tabungan simpan pinjam* are another inserted programs to particularly aimed to give each member to feel the stronger bond and to get more benefit from the gathering. Practically speaking, these two additional agendas have the functions to give more drive and motivation to

[8] Part of social gathering in which the member collect the same certain amount of money in every meeting and later they make lucky draw to decide which of the member would get the collected money. This is done in such order that all the member would get their turn.

[9] Money deposit which also serve as a mean of Saving and Lending for those in the community

the members to come to the gathering. Thus it raises the sense of belonging to each other. According to them, the most important of all it is all about how to make such a program could last forever and it is crucial for Buddhists which population is only a few to not feel alone by having solid community base activity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, chanting in Indonesia has become one of essential part of religious life style that is carried on by most of Buddhists. Although Chanting is not obligatory in nature, but most of Indonesian Buddhists spare their time to do the chanting, both individually and communally. Unlike in any other religions, where the leader of a ritual determined under certain qualification, Buddhism in Indonesia does not follow that same pattern. Every Buddhist appears to be equally potential to act as chanting leader.

In Indonesia, chanting is not only practiced in a vihara but also at the house of Buddhists community members. In the course of practice, the leading person must call for invitation for every sutta they are about to read. This invitation lines are called either in Pali or Bahasa Indonesia. At last, chanting has vividly become important for Buddhist and finally for the sustain of the The teaching of the Buddha. Chanting has also indicated to be one of social gathering, in which sporadic Buddhist in Indonesia could enjoy social relation with their fellow Buddhists.

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Buddhist Women and Polygamy Issue in Indonesia

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Background

Marriage is a human's phenomenon that is commonly practiced, since the ancient civilizations, regardless of geography, religion, race and social classes. Marriage in the vulgarized-Latin is *marītācum* and in the Latin is *marītātus,* meaning 'to wed, marry and give in marriage'.[1] Now days, marriage is defined as 1. a formal, usually legally recognized, agreement between a man and a woman making them husband and wife; 2. a ceremony at which a couple are married.[2] Marriage of the first meaning is meant in this article and it is not the second one.

There are many kinds of marriage which have been influenced by the religious, social and philosophical viewpoints. Generally, there are three kinds of marriage, namely polygamy, monogamy and group marriage. Monogamy is the practice or custom of being married to only one person at a time.[3] This is commonly practice in the society and of course this type of marriage can be seen everywhere. But, group marriage is quite rare to be seen. Group marriage involves more than one member of each sex. They live together by sharing husband and wife, and responsibility in taking care of wealth and children.[4] However, these two types of marriage are not the purpose of this article. The main purpose of this article is to discuss and examine the third type of marriage: polygamy.

The term polygamy is defined in two ways: 1. the custom of having more than one wife at the same time[5]; 2. a marriage where male or female has more than one spouse.[6] The second definition leads to the other marital terms called polygyny and polyandry. When a female has more than one husband, it is called polyandry; while the male who has many wives is called polygyny. Polygyny can be found in many places throughout the time whether in the ancient or contemporary time but polyandry is quite rare and difficult to be seen. It might be because of gender issues where in many societies women have less freedom, including freedom to choose and to have many husbands. As far as the historical record is concerned, polyandry has been practiced in Sparta of ancient Greece[7] and in Hindu society where Draupadi has five husbands (*Pandawa*) at the same time as depicted in Hindu's epic, Mahābhārata.[8] In spite of two definitions of polygamy mentioned above, in this

1 Ernest Klein. Etymological English Dictionary. London: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1966, p. 941.
2 Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 5th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 718.
3 Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 5th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995, p. 753.
4 *Group Marriage*, Encyclopædia Britannica Online, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/247131/group-marriage, retrieved January 28, 2010
5 Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 5th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995, p. 894.
6 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polygamy. Retrieved, 3 October 2011.
7 In the Spartan belief that breeding should be between the most physically fit parents, many older men allowed younger more fit men to impregnate their wives. Other unmarried or childless men might even request another man's wife to bear his children if she had previously been a strong child bearer. For this reason many considered Spartan women polyandrous. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Ancient_Sparta. Retrieved 23rd September 2011. Cf. Blundell, Sue (1995), *Women in ancient Greece*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, ISBN 9780674954731. Pg. 154
8 J.A.B. Van Buitenen. Mahābhārata. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1975, p. 111, p. 138. However Draupadi's husbands have several wives. For example, Arjuna has several wives namely Ulupi, Citrāṅgadā and Subadra. See: http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arjuna. Retrieved on 11th October 2011.

analysis, the definition of polygamy is a marriage where a husband has more than one wife. This definition is based on the etymological meaning of polygamy which comes from the Middle France *polygamic* and from the Late Latin *polygamia* meaning 'having many wives".[9]

Though polygamy is practiced by many Indonesians, it is difficult to show the statistical evidence about how many Indonesian men who are practicing polygamy. It is because many polygamous marriages are usually unregistered to the government.[10] Likewise, it is also not clear about how many percent of Indonesian Buddhist men are practicing polygamy. Although it is not clear about the percentage, the practice of polygamy takes place among Buddhist and this practice brings to the disadvantage to the Buddhist women such as instigating the domestic violence and neglecting the family's welfare. However, before discussing this problem further, it is better to discuss the practice of polygamy in general first.

Polygamy Practice in Indonesia: From the Ancient to the Present Day

Polygamy is not human nature. It is practiced because of many reasons such as social view which considers women as the agent of reproductions, labour and property. Perhaps, because of this reason, polygamy had been practiced since the ancient time[11] in many societies including Indonesia. The royal families of Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia were not exempted. The practice of polygamy that can be traced back is only those practiced by the royal families because their life story is written in the historical books. Polygamy by royal families usually was because of political reasons such as for the sake of conjoining the power of kingdoms. For example, in order to conjoin the power of Kalingga and Galuh kingdom, there had been marriage between Prince of Galuh, Mandiminyak, with princess of Kalingga, Parwati in the 6th century A.D. As recorded in the history, Mandiminyak was not only married to Parwati but he also got married to another woman named Pohaci Rahabu.[12] Polygamy for the sake of strengthening the political relationship of two countries was exemplified by the polygamy of King Brawijaya, king of Majapahit kingdom during 14th century. Besides having several local wives, he had a wife from Campa kingdom known as Putri Dwarawati. Putri Dwarawati was a gift given by General Yan Lu of Ming Dynasty of Campa kingdom to strengthen the relationship between Majapahit and Campa.[13]

In about 15th century A.D., when Islam became prominent religion in the country, polygamy was also practiced by kings of Islamic kingdoms. The most famous king of Mataram Islamic kingdom named Sultan Agung had two chief queens. One was Ratu Kulon, the daughter of leader of Cirebon and the other was Ratu Wetan, Governor Batang's daughter.[14] His marriage to both princesses was to strengthen the devotion of people of Cirebon and Batang districts to the kingdom. From his marriage to Ratu Kulon, a son named Pangeran Alit was born to him and Ratu Wetan gave a birth to another son, named Raden Mas Sayidin. After Sultan Agung passed away, Raden Mas Sayidin killed Pangeran Alit and he enthroned himself as king of Mataram Islam entitled Amangkurat I.

9 Ernerst Klein. A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of English Language. New York: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1966, p. 1212
10 http://www.freedom-institute.org/pdf/perempuan_dlm_UU_perkawinan.pdf . Retrieved on 11th October 2011
11 Be fruitful and multiply and replenish earth, Genesis I; 28.
12 http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerajaan_Galuh. Retrieved on 23rd September 2011
13 http://mcfeet.wordpress.com/ Retrieved on 23rd September 2011
14 http://www.bingkaindonesia.com/tokoh/19-sultan-agung-adi-prabu-hanyakrakusuma.html. Retrieved on 23rd September 2011

Amangkurat I also practiced polygamy and the reason seemed only for the sake of his pleasure. For example, he murdered a person who had been working in his palace as puppet player for long time named Dalang Panjang Mas, in order to get his wife, Ratu Mas Malang. Amangkurat I had fought with his own son, Raden Rahmat, who had a love affair with a girl who would be taken as wife by Amangkurat I, named Rara Oyi. Finally, Amangkurat I asked his son to kill Rara Oyi, so that neither one of them would marry her.

From the above facts, it could be seen that polygamy had already existed in Indonesia since the first millennium. In fact, polygamy was not practiced only by royal families but also by common people. This practice is continued from generation to generation; moreover, it gets ideological umbrella from many local philosophies which put women in lower position than men. Indonesians, especially Javanese people, believe in the concept that women are helper (*konco wingking*, literally it means friend-behind) of men because men are the leader of the family.[15] Hence, mentally and financially women have the mindset to always depend on men. This non-independent attitude of women brings to the acceptance of whatever their husbands do, including polygamy. Besides that, marriage law regulated by government which allows polygamy under certain circumstances is also becoming another factor for the continuation of polygamy.

Marriage is regulated by Indonesian government in the Act 1/1974.[16] The general principle of marriage is a psychological and physical relationship between a female and a male as husband and wife for the purpose of forming a harmonious and happy family.[17] Based on this rule, it is clear that the general principle of marriage regulated by government is monogamy and that is what is mentioned in the article number 3 subsection 1. However, there is a possibility for a man to have more wives because in the following subsection of the same article of the above regulation says that "man is allowed to marry to more than a woman if there is agreement between parties involved in it".[18] The next article states that the marriage to more than one wife is allowed if the wife cannot do her duty (physically and mentally), get sick that cannot be cured or unfertile.[19] Hence, if a wife is in the one of three aforementioned conditions, a husband can marry another woman as his new wife. With the above regulations, a married man by getting the consent from his wife and showing that he is able to give material, psychological and physical needs to more than one wife will be granted permission to practice polygamy.[20] The marriage law also mentions that if in the case a husband loses contact with the wife after two years, he can marry to another woman without the consent and agreement from the missing-wife. However, in this marriage regulation, it is not clearly mentioned about the limitation of having wife. Due to influence of Islamic teaching, people are in the assumption that a man can have four wives at the same time.

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15 http://esterlianawati.wordpress.com/2008/04/09/perempuan-jawa-konco-wingking-atau-sigaraning-nyawa/. Retrieved on 9th October 2011.

16 *Undang-Undang Perkawinan (UUP) No. 1 Tahun 1974. Marriage Law 1974.* http://hukum.unsrat.ac.id/uu/uu_1_74.htm. Retrieved 11th October 2011.

17 The Act 1/1974, I, 1.

18 The Act 1/1974, I, 1, (1). It might be because of philosophical view that woman is just like earth so that it cannot have many suns (husbands) at the same time, while husband as a sun, he is possible to have many planets at the same time. James Campbell. *History and Philosophy of Marriage or Polygamy and Monogamy*. Salt Lake City: Jos. Hyrum Parry and Co. 1885, p. 217

19 The Act 1/1974, I, 4 (1)

20 The Act 1/1974, I, 5, (1-2)

What can be seen from the above regulation is a gender bias. According to these rules, in marriage life women are just considered as the agent of producing children, and therefore, if they fail to fulfill this duty as the consequence, polygamy must be accepted by them. Because of this reason, some Indonesian women and human right activists are demanding the government to amend the marriage law by abolishing the permission to practice polygamy for whatever the reason might be.[21] However, because of the influence of the religious view of Islam as major religion, this demand has not been fulfilled by the government yet because polygamy is allowed in Islam.

Although Islamic teaching allows Muslims to marry to more than one wife, many Muslims, as the major citizens and in which their teachings have the direct influences to the permission of doing polygamy, are also debating it. Based on the teaching as depicted in the Surah An-Nisa,[22] some Muslims say that having maximum four wives with the promise to deal justly to all wives, psychologically and psychically, is allowed. Supporters of polygamy say that it is the best way to reduce adultery and to help women of getting better life.[23] They also say that statistically, women are more than men in numbers and definitely they will get difficulties in finding husband.[24] In supporting polygamy, a polygamous man named Puspo Wardoyo, the owner of restaurant "Wong Solo" in Central Java is promoting the "polygamy award".[25] This award is given to a man who is practicing successful polygamy. After reading the Hadiths, however, some Muslims come to the different opinion, saying that polygamy cannot be practiced. In the Hadiths there is a story when Ali bin Thalib, son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad who marries to the Prophet's daughter, Fatimah, is asking Prophet's permission to marry to another woman and the Prophet does not allow it because it will hurt Fatimah.[26] This is evidence that polygamy should not be practiced. Explaining why the prophet Muhammad has nine wives, this group says that the Prophet was doing polygamy because of social situation at that time where many widows need his help. Hence, his polygamous marriage was out of his compassion toward widows. In rejecting polygamy this group concludes that polygamy gives psychological pressure to woman. Though a man is having vast religious knowledges and good economic income, finally he still has problems with the wives due to psychological reasons. A.A. Gymnastiar, a famous Muslim preacher who divorced his first wife recently was a real example of it.[27]

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[21] http://www.lbh-apik.or.id/amandemen_UUP-usulan.htm. Retrieved 23rd September 2011.

[22] And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, of four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from perform doing injustice. An-Nissa,3.

[23] http://www.menegpp.go.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=105:poligami-tanggapan-atas-keputusan-mahkamah-konstitusi-&catid=49:artikel-gender&Itemid=116 (Official website of the Ministry of Woman Affair of Indonesia). This view is held by some people since the ancient time evidenced by the statement that "The experience of every age and of every community has proved that many men cannot and will not content themselves with one woman. There must be polygamy, or else there must be prostitution, and prostitution is wickedness, and wickedness is degradation". James Campbell. *History and Philosophy of Marriage or Polygamy and Monogamy*. Salt Lake City: Jos. Hyrum Parry ad Co. 1885, P. 209

[24] But, this second reason is wrong because based on the recent census of Indonesian citizens shows that in general males citizen are 119.630.913 and females citizens are 118.010.413. Sex comparison in Indonesia in 2010 is 101,4. So, in every 1000 women there are 1014 men. http://dds.bps.go.id/download_file/IP_Oktober_2011.pdf . Retrieved on 11th October 2011.

[25] http://polygamyagenda.com/awards32104.htm. Retrieved on 23rd September 2011. Cf; *GATRA*, Nomor 23 Beredar Senin 21 April 2003] (http://arsip.gatra.com/2003-04-21/versi_cetak.php?id=27357).

[26] Shahih Bukhari, Hadits No.4829.

[27] http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/11/06/21/ln4f4j-hakim-kabulkan-permohonan-aa-gym-resmi-ceraidengan-teh-ninih. Retrieved 23rd September 2012

Marriage and Polygamy: A Buddhist View

Speaking about marriage life, Buddhists as Indonesian citizens are also under the marriage law regulated by the government. Buddhist men can marry to more than one wife and therefore, Buddhist women are in the situation where they might have co-wife at any time. Usually, Buddhist men who are doing polygamy are married to the second wife based on Islamic custom. So, what they did is changing their religious status in the identity card and then conducts the second or third marriage in Islamic way. It is because in Islam there is '*nikah siri"* (informal Muslim marriage), a marriage which is legal according to Islamic law without being registered to the government.[28] This kind of marriage just needs some people as witnesses, the permission of village authority, consent from parents and authorized by the Muslim cleric. Government usually is silent seeing this kind of marriage as it is allowed in major religion. Even though, *nikah siri* becomes debatable recently because the children of this kind of marriage will find difficulty to obtain the birth certificate and the wives are uncertain about their economic welfare.

The possibility of practicing polygamy for Buddhist men seems acceptable from the Buddhist view because there is no explicit rule in the Tipiṭaka which prohibits polygamy. And also, as it can be seen from Buddhist texts, there are many Buddha's disciples who are practicing polygamy such as King Pasenadi of Kosala[29] and King Bimbisara. King Bimbisāra's chief queen was Kosaladevī[30] and the other wives are Khemā,[31] the courtesan Padumavatī[32] and also Ambapālī.[33] Based on these facts, the question is "did the Buddha agree with the practice of polygamy? If the Buddha did not agree, why did not the Buddha teach them to lead a monogamous marriage?" These questions must be answered from the socio-historical background. First, it should be noted that they already have many wives before meeting the Buddha. King Bimbisāra who is five years younger than the Buddha[34] must be getting married before the Ascetic Gotama attained enlightenment. Hence, it was impossible for the Buddha to tell them suddenly that having many wives was not good and therefore they should divorce their wives and juts live with one wife. It might create new problems, i.e., the welfare of the wives who were divorced. Second, it must be kept in mind that Buddhism is religion which considers marriage as secular; therefore, it is not regulated clearly in the Tipiṭaka. Not like Islam[35] or Abrahamic religions[36] that teach that marriage is a duty,[37] in Buddhist perspective getting married is a choice of individual. Marriage is neither prohibited nor recommended. Buddhists have freedom to choose whether they will marry or not because it is not a sin to be unmarried.

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[28] It is also called as "nikah gantung" Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2001, p. 1003.

[29] According to the Piyajātika Sutta, his chief queen is Queen Mallika and there another wife named Queen Vāsabhā (M.N. II, 108 ff). The Kaṇṇakatthala Sutta (M. N. II, 125) mentions two others wives of King Pasenadi who were sisters named Somā and Sakulā.

[30] *bimbisārarañño dhītaraṃ vedehiṃ nāma kosaladeviṃ* . Jāt.A. II, 403.

[31] She finally enters the order and become the foremost among women disciples in great insight (mahāpaññānam). A.N. I, 25

[32] *Abhayamātutherīgāthāvaṇṇanā*. ThigA. 38.

[33] *Rājā hi bimbisāro taruṇakāle ambapāliyā rūpasampattiṃ sutvā sañjātābhilāso katipayamanussaparivāro aññātakavesena vesāliṃ gantvā ekarattiṃ tāya saṃvāsaṃ kappesi*. ThagA.I, 155

[34] G.P. Malalasekera. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul. 1974, p. 285

[35] AN-Nissa 4, 3. (there is command to every human to have married (fankihu)

[36] And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Genesis II, 28

[37] Due to the idea that marriage is a duty, there is an argument says that unmarried women are wasting their sweetness in the open air. James Campbell. *History and Philosophy of Marriage or Polygamy and Monogamy*. Salt Lake City: Jos. Hyrum Parry ad Co. 1885, P. 63

What is the real nature of marriage from Buddhist perspective? The Agaññā Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya[38] might give some clues for this question. In this sutta, it is elucidated that due to lust, male and female get attracted to each other and they end in sexual relationship.[39] When the sexual relationship happens everywhere, people consider it as taboo and therefore those people who engage in sexual relationship are banned from the society. However, the sexual relationship is still remaining in the society. In due course of time, people start to build houses to conceal their sexual relationship.[40] Gradually, people who live in the same house for long time have commitment to live together. This is the pioneer of marriage. What can be seen from this historical analysis is that, marriage has great possibility to be affected by lust. However, it does not mean that Buddhism totally sees the marriage as merely legalization of conjugal relationship. In the Mahāvacchagotta Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya the Buddha teaches that the life as householders can also be directed for attaining *Nibbāna*.[41] It is important principle that should be understood because the enlightenment is not monopoly for clergy but also possible to be gained by the householders. As can be witnessed in Buddhist texts,[42] there are many householders who attain the fruits of purification such as Anāgāmī Ugga[43] and Anāgāmī Hatthaka Alavaka.[44] Visākhā[45] and Aṇathapiṇḍika[46] as two chiefs lay female and male supporters of the Buddha who are stream winner can also be taken as another example.

How can householders attain the stages of purification? It is by balancing the development of the mundane and spiritual life. Practicing the Noble Eightfold Path i.e., having good conduct (*sīla*), developing concentration of mind (*samādhi*) and realizing insight (*paññā*) must be the way of life. These three should be practiced simultaneously. To start the training of good conduct, the Buddha has advised lay people to observe precepts whether five precepts (*pañcasīla*)[47] in daily life or eight precepts (*atthasīla*) on the Uposatha day.[48] On the uposatha day, Buddhist householders are advised to practice celibate life.[49] Even according to the Suttanipāta, householders may practice celibate life daily. If in the case one finds difficulty to practice celibate life, one should not have relationship with others' wife.[50] The Gihi Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya says that it is not only by avoiding relationship with others' wives but one must also be glad with their own wife.[51] What is the significance of the training to practice celibate life? The purpose of this training is to train the householders to reduce the sensual indulgence (*kāmacchanda*) which is one of the five hindrances.[52] It is because, as far as *kāmacchanda* is in existence the concentration (*samādhi*) will not be gained

[38] D.N. III, 82, ff
[39] D.N. III, 89
[40] Maurice Walshe. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995, p. 412
[41] M. N. I , 491
[42] A.N.I, 26
[43] who is the best of those who gave agreeable gifts (*manāpadāyakānam*)
[44] who is foremost among those who gather a following by means of the four bases of sympathy (*catūhi vatthūhi parisam saṅganhantānam*)
[45] A.N. IV,348
[46] S.N. I, 212
[47] *Pāṇātipātā paṭivirato ca hoti, adinnādānā paṭivirato ca hoti, kāmesumicchācārā paṭivirato ca hoti, musāvādā paṭivirato ca hoti, surāmerayamajjappamādaṭṭhānā paṭivirato. Pañcasīla Sutta*. S. N. IV, 245 *cf:* D. N. III, 235; S. N. lV, 245, A. N. I, 211,
[48] A.N. I. 214.
[49] A.N. I, 211.
[50] *Abrahmacariyaṃ parivajjayeyya, aṅgārakāsuṃ jalitaṃva viññū; Asambhuṇanto pana brahmacariyaṃ, parassa dāraṃ na atikkameyya*. Sn. 398
[51] *'Sehi dārehi santuṭṭho, paradārañca ārame*. A. III. 213.
[52] Five hindrances are: *Kāmacchanda, byāpāda, thinamiddha, uddhaccakukkucca, and vicikiccha*. D. N. II, 300.

and the insight (*paññā*) will not be realized.[53] As the result, people are entangled in *saṃsāric* cycle and far away from *Nibbāna*. Based on this teaching, what can be summed up is that, the polygamous life will have much risks and difficulties in training the celibate life and reducing the attachment of sensual pleasures. Not only increasing the risk to be trapped in sensual indulgence, polygamy also creates more familial obstacle (*kula palibodhā*) in doing meditation.[54] The best example is the explanation in the Piyajātika Sutta in which the dear and near ones in the families are the source of worries and will bring to the despair and lamentation if separation happens.[55] Hence, it can be said that polygamy gives more possibility to prolong the life in the *saṃsāric* journey.

Seeing the above facts, how should Buddhist women deal with polygamy issue in maintaining her family life? Firstly and foremost, women must empower themselves with the ability to manage the family as can be seen in the Sigalovāda Sutta.[56] Secondly, it is by building good communication with the husband so that both wife and husband will be able to possess faith (*saddha*), morality (*sīla*), generosity (*cāga*) and wisdom (*paññā*).[57] Then, women as integral part of the family as far as possible should bring the religious atmosphere to the family to make it close to the Dhamma. It is by encouraging all family members to practice the good conduct, cultivating the mind in order to develop wisdom. Visākhā is the best example for lay female disciple who has succeeded to bring her family to the Dhammic way. That is why, as far as the texts are concerned, there is no report of polygamy practiced by her husband, Paññāvadhana. Due to greatness of Visākhā as wife, daughter-in-law and inspiratory of Dhamma, she is known as "Migāramāta", a mother of Migāra, her father in law. It is only by having a good Dhammic understanding, a family will get real happiness where husband and wife will not think how to marry another woman or man but, how to support each other to get rid from *saṃsāric* cycle.

[53] *pañca nīvaraṇe pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbalīkaraṇe.* Uttiya Sutta. A.N. V, 193 or Avaraṇā Sutta. A.N. III. 63

[54] *Puna caparaṃ, mahārāja, ākāso alaggo asatto appatiṭṭhito apalibuddho, evameva kho, mahārāja, yoginā yogāvacarena kule gaṇe lābhe āvāse palibodhe paccaye sabbakilesesu ca sabbattha alaggena bhavitabbaṃ, anāsattena appatiṭṭhitena apalibuddhena bhavitabbaṃ. Miln*. 388. Cf: Vims 91.

[55] M.N. II, 105, ff.

[56] D.N. III, 180

[57] *samasaddhā samasīlā samacāgā samapaññā.* A.N. II, 61

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Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's Interpreting and Translating Buddhism in Indonesian Cultural and Political Contexts

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Background

Since Indonesian independence in 1945, the founders of this new state had agreed on a proposed ideology as a national foundation for uniting all ethnicities, religions, and races. Proposed by Sukarno, *Pancasila*, the ideological foundation consisting of five principles of the new state was finalized by the Committee of Five (*Panitia Lima*) in the form of the Indonesian Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*). The first principle is the *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*, or commonly translated as the "Belief in One Supreme God,"[1] which has been a major problem for Buddhism. As a religion that differs in its teaching of the theistic aspect, Buddhism has been struggling for dealing and accommodating the state-imposed concept of god originally derived from monotheistic religions.

Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita, who had a major role in the awakening of Buddhism in the country, along with a number of his disciples (*panditas)*,[2] came up with *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* as the answer for the quest for god in Buddhism. He and the *panditas* 'skillfully' offered the concept as a response to the critical situation of the State's reinforcing of the *Pancasila* after a communist coup in 1965. To be officially recognized by the State as a one of the major religions, and thus, not suspiciously seen or accused as atheism, Buddhism must be able to prove that it has god as the center of faith and practice. While the State seemed to be easily satisfied with his assurance, questions came from their fellow Buddhists and, later, also Ashin Jinarakkhita's primary disciples who were on the same boat with him in the beginning. Since then, debates, disintegration, and splits could not be avoided within Buddhist organizations. The strongest opposition was coming from the Theravādan members, and it seemed to happen partly because of the influence of the Thai Buddhist's purification movement started in the nineteenth century by King Mongkut as later on many Thai *bhikkhus* coming to Indonesia. Though there were also Buddhist monks coming from Sri Lanka, such as Bhikkhu Narada Thera and Mahasi Sayadaw and his group, they only came a few times during these early years.

This paper will be focusing on the background of the inventing of the concept *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* by Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita and his disciples. There have been a number of studies on the subject with an emphasis on the Buddhological assessment of the concept itself, which originally comes from the Tantrayāna tradition. Other studies are concerned more with the political aspect of the situation that triggered the promotion of *Sanghyang Ādibuddha*, particularly on the dilemma the Indonesian Buddhists in accommodating *Pancasila* as an ideological foundation of the State. I am examining it from the standpoint of the one of the originators, Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita. By understanding his socio-cultural background, we might be able to understand the factors that

[1] This principle has been translated differently and it will be discussed in the third section of this paper.
[2] *Pandita* is lay Buddhist people who is assumed to be accomplished in Buddhist teaching and the leader of the laypeople.

brought him to his choice, not only of the concept of *Sanghyang Ādibuddha*, but also of his 'unique' form of Buddhism which later be known as Buddhayāna.

Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita: Leading to the Awakening of an Indonesian Buddhism

Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita was a Buddhist name given to Tee Boan An[3] when he was ordained as a monk in Burma in 1953 within Theravāda tradition. A prominent Burmese meditation teacher, Mahasi Sayadaw, was his preceptor and his meditation teacher. Previously he had been ordained as a *sramanera*[4] according to Mahāyāna tradition by a Chinese monk, Mahābhiksu Pen Ching who was residing in *klenteng*[5] Kong Hoa Sie in Jakarta. His *sramanera* ordination name was Ti Chen. The reason he was searching for a *bhikkhu* ordination in Burma and not in China as a Mahayāna Buddhist country was because a diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and China had not been established.[6] *Sramanera* Ti Chen's desire for becoming a full-fledged Buddhist monk and then carrying out his mission to spread the Buddha's teaching was very strong. This might explain why he did not mind to receive his ordination within either Mahāyāna or Theravāda tradition.

Tee Boan An was born in Bogor, West Java on January 23, 1923 into a Chinese descent family. Since studying in elementary school, he had shown his interest in spirituality. He liked to visit *klentengs* and to ask questions about spirits, ghosts, and deities to the *klentengs'* keepers. Muslim clerics and pastors became his companions in discussing spirituality, though he was just a teenager. Going to mountains and doing meditation became his routine activities. His appeals to spirituality were something that his father did not agree with, but it seemed to be his biggest drive in his life. This was proven when after finishing his studying at HBS (in science)[7] and HCS (in natural science),[8] he went to the Netherlands, studying chemistry at the Universiteit Groningen, but then he decided to quit from his school and following his spiritual quest.[9] It is clear that Boan An had been engaged in the spiritual realm since the very beginning and not limited to Buddhist spirituality, but with other religions as well.

Boan An met with a member of the Theosophical Society in the mount Gede, who later gave him two books in spirituality, *The Ancient Wisdom* and *The Secret Doctrines*, as an introduction to theosophy. From this Dutchman, Boan An learned about healing by means of magnetism energy, which he often performed to help others.[10] While studying abroad, Boan An began actively involved in Theosophical Society organization. If previously he shown interest in diverse religions and belief systems, now he directed his attention and learning more towards Buddhism. Upon his return to Indonesia Boan An was appointed to be the Deputy Chairman of the *Perhimpunan Pemuda Theosofi*

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[3] In other writings his name is spelled as The Boan An and The Bwan An. I am using Tee Boan An as it is in his biography written by Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita*, Bandung: Yayasan Karaniya, 1995.

[4] *Sramanera* is a Sanskrit term for a male Buddhist novice, *samanera* in Pali.

[5] *Klenteng* is a place of worship for a three-united religion or *Tridharma*: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

[6] Juangari, Edij. *Ibid*., pp. 48-50.

[7] HBS was an equivalent for senior high school, and B division is in science.

[8] Now Technological Institute of Bandung

[9] Juangari, Edij., *Ibid*., pp. 29-30.

[10] See Kandahjaya about this Dutchman known as van der Stock. Ibid., p. 7.

Indonesia (Indonesian Association of Young Theosophists).[11] He opted to commit himself to be an *anagarika*, one who devotes his life for Dharma and taking a celibate life, but not yet a monk.

Anagarika Boan An was traveling throughout Java giving talks on Buddhism. He attracted attention of people coming from different background and ethnicities. The *Kejawen* communities (Javanese indigenous beliefs) were inviting him to have spiritual exchange with him. The *Sam Kaw Hwee* or Three Religions Organization (later on changed into *Tridharma*), an ethnic Chinese organization and the theosophical Society were very supportive to Anagarika Boan An's work of spreading the Dharma throughout Java. Eventually his idea to hold a national commemoration of the Vesak at the Borobudur temple for the first time after the demise of Buddhism in the fifteenth century became materialized in May, 1953. Buddhists from different provinces gathered together in the great temple, even government representatives and delegates from a number of Buddhist countries attended the sacred event.[12] Following this Anagarika Boan An was gaining more popularity among Buddhists. With the help of his teacher, Mahābhiksu Pen Ching and his colleagues, he managed to go to Burma learning *vipassana*[13] meditation and then receiving a full ordination as a *bhikkhu*.[14] In the following years Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita traveled both cities and villages, in Java and other provinces to awaken Buddhism.

We have found out that Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita was a unique personality; he was a combination of an ethnic Chinese who was acquainted with the *Kejawen* teachings and practices. Embracing two different Buddhist traditions, by receiving teachings and ordination from Mahayana and Theravada, he was enriched by the two without finding contradiction. Having an enormous fascination in spirituality and mysticism since an early age was in fact not conflicting with his natural science and physics schoolwork. During his missionary work upon his return from Burma, he taught both the Theravada tradition under which his monk ordination was conferred and the Mahayana teachings and chanting where he was receiving an early training from his teacher, the Mahābhikshu Pen Ching. Even the way he dressed as a monk was also an amalgamation of a Mahāyānist (Chinese) and a Theravādan monk dressing in yellow-Theravādan robes, but letting his beard growing long as if in a Buddhist Chinese custom.[15] Shortly we will be coming to the point in which his model of Buddhism and teachings, and most importantly, the proposal for god for Indonesian Buddhism has been controversial. All of this seems to be the representation of his unique characteristics as an Indonesian Buddhist as a product of and thus in turn also producing a blended diverse elements obtaining from the Indonesian soil.

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[11] There is a different account on his return to Indonesia; Juagari puts early 1951, while Brown writes 1949, based on his personal interview and on *Sang Pengasuh, 30 tahun Pengabdian Suci Y.A. Maha Nayaka Sthavira Ashin Jinarakkhita*. Brown, Iem. "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism and Monotheism," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), pp. 109.

[12] Juangari, Edij. *Ibid*., pp. 45-46.

[13] *Vipassana* meditation is also known as insight meditation, a mediation practice to pursue spiritual enlightenment. Another meditation form in the Theravada tradition is known as *samatha*, a meditation practice to achieve a single-focused of mind (mental calmness).

[14] Juangari, Edij. *Ibid*., p. 56.

[15] In the Theravada tradition, a monk has to shave their head, eye brows, mustache, and beard, while in the Mahayana tradition only requires a shaven head.

Re-enforcing the *Pancasila*: A Crisis of Authority

Before the communist coup in September 1965, the concept of god was never a crucial part of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's concerns during his spreading the teaching of Buddha.[16] His invention of *Sanghyang Ādibuddha*, then, seemed to be in response to the political turmoil caused by the communist coup which made the reinforcement of the *Pancasila*, with a strong emphasis on the first principle, the *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*.

As I briefly mentioned previously, there have been a multiple translations of this principle. The most widely accepted is the "Belief in One God." Others translate it as "Divine Omnipotence," "An All-embracing God," "the Being of Supreme Deity," "Oneness of God," "One Lordship." Dharmaputera argues that all these are not the translations of the Pancasila's first principle, but interpretations, and all are wrong ones. His own interpretation, which he deems to be the only correct one, is the "Recognition of One Lordness." His argument is that the word Tuhan in Indonesian word originates from "*Allah*" (Arabic) as it was debated in the formulation of the *Piagam Jakarta* (the Jakarta Charter), thus, it is to be translated as "Lord." With the addition of prefix and suffix, it changes the noun into an adjective "*Ketuhanan*" or "Lordness." "*Yang Maha Esa*" means the "One."[17] His interpretation, because he relates it to the historical background of the formulation of the *Pancasila*, is understood to be informed by an Islamic perspective, though he himself is probably unaware of his bias in choosing the word "Lord" which signifying a male gender, while in Islam, god is none of either gender. Hidayah points out that the translating or interpreting the first principle as the Recognition of the Divine Omnipotence, based on C.A. O. von Nieuwenhujie's translation is more corresponding to the Indonesian understanding.[18]

It was, indeed, the principle of acknowledging of god by all religions and beliefs systems (*kepercayaan*) in the country that had already been a serious issue from its inception. The final configuration of *Pancasila* took out the word "Allah," the particular god of the Muslims—and perhaps also of the Christians so far as the god who is creating the world and all beings is being concerned—from the fifth principle. The phrase constituting the observation of the *sharia'* was also omitted from this principle. By changing the order of the fifth principle into the first, the State was ensuring the recognition of 'one' god for all religions, thus, accommodating the concern of the Islamists. Thus, belief in god is the most critical aspect to all religions and belief system (*aliran kepercayaan*). The acknowledgment of 'one' god became "a foundation which leads is to the ways of truth, justice, goodness, honesty, human-brother- (and sister) hood, etc. With it, the State strengthens its own foundation"[19]

Dharmaputera argues that the influence from the Islamic faction in the drafting of the Jakarta Charter was viable, and he admits that it is understandable if we come to conclude that the change of order of the five principles by putting the principle of belief in one god in the first position is to

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[16] Brown, Iem. "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism and Monotheism," the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), p. 111. In Juangari's book, though not explicitly stated, the discussion about the concept Sanghyang Adibuddha also occurs only after the communist coup; there is no such mentioning of the concept of god in the early stages of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's talks on Buddhism.

[17] Dharmaputera, Eka. *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988, p. 153.

[18] Hidayah, Sita. "Religion in the Proper Sense of the Word: the Discourse of "Agama" in Indonesia," Unpublished M.A. thesis, the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies, Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University, 2008, p. 1.

19 *Panitia Lima, Uraian Pancasila*, p. 42, in Dharmaputera, Eka. *Ibid*., p. 152.

satisfy this group.[20] Thus, even their urge to choose Islam as the state foundation was declined, the principle of monotheism (*tawhid*), the most essential Islamic basis of faith is granted in the first place. While this was giving a firm foundation for unifying all differences in one single ideological foundation, it has been creating problems for other religions and belief system that their perception of the ultimate truth has not always been in the form of such a 'god' as in the monotheistic religions.

Why was then, that, the Indonesian State reinforced the *Pancasila* as its ideological foundation? The modern nation state of Indonesia itself being newly freed from the colonial occupation, had been facing what Keyes identifies as the *crisis of authority* - the Indonesian state made its effort "to-opt, reshape, marginalize, and, in some cases, suppress religious communities within the territories under their control."[21] It might be a price to pay for the modernization and national-building projects of the Indonesian state. The State was in its crucial stage to anchor its authority over any other potential authorities and communities to ensure its uncontested power. Moreover, Indonesia confronted the communist coup only twenty years after its independence, which made its position to be even more vulnerable. Therefore, *Pancasila* was re-imposed upon any organizations both secular and religious, with the emphasis on the principle of belief in Divine Omnipotence as the strong rejection of communism. All religions and belief system in Indonesia must not give an opportunity for the State to suspect them as atheistic, which was equated with communism. Hidayah notes that: "…for more than thirty years, some Indonesians - and especially *adat* communities—have been labeled as communist.[22]

Buddhism does not have a reference of a god as the creator and the granter of reward and punishment, but it does have an ultimate goal that has the quality of a god, and this placing this non-theistic religion to be easily seen as "atheist."[23] There was another problem caused by the imposing of the definition of *agama* or religion by the Ministry of Religion in 1952, which was and still is dominated by the *santri* (Islamists).[24]

Walubi (Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia or the Indonesian Buddhist Council Association)[25], has generalized many debates, conflicts, and disintegration among Buddhist organizations, partly because of its adoption of the definition of *agama* in defining what to be accepted as Indonesian Buddhism/s. In the congress the representatives of Buddhist *sanghas* and councils came to authorize the characteristics of Indonesian Buddhism, which later being authorized in the founding document of the Walubi: 1) all Buddhist sects in Indonesia have belief in *Tuhan Yang Maha Esa* (we will be discussing shortly), 2) all Buddhist sects appreciate difference addresses for God that is fundamentally one and the same God, 3) all Buddhist sects acknowledge the Buddha Gotama as prophet, have the foundation on the Tripitaka scripture, and dutifully performing the Guidelines for Instilling and Implementing Pancasila (*Ekaprasetya Pancakarsa* or P-4), 4) all Buddhist sects have different followers throughout the archipelago. The congress produced the verdict on the criteria

[20] Dharmaputera, Eka. *Ibid*., p. 153.

[21] Keyes, Charles F. et all (ed.). *Asian Visions of Authority: Religion and the Modern States of East and Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 1

[22] Hidayah, Sita. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[23] Though there is indeed, no such a god as it is described in monotheistic religions, some Indonesian Buddhists leaders and/or clerics have been very careful in explaining this issue. They seem to be "appropriating" or "explaining' the concept of *nibbana* or *nirvana*—the deemed-to be an equal concept of god in Buddhism—within the language of the monotheism., i.e.: Bhikkhu Uttamo in his article "KeTuhanan dalam Agama Buddha."

[24] Dharmaputera, Eka. Ibid., p. 83.

[25] Walubi was established in 1979, then, abolished, and reestablished again in 1998.

for Buddhism in Indonesia, that there is *Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*, *Triratna-Tiratana*, (*trilaksana-tilakkhana*), *Catur Arya Satyani/Cattari Ariya Saccani, pratitya samutpada/paticca samuppada, karma/kamma, punarbhava/punnabhava, nirvana/nibbana,* and *Bodhisattva/ Bodhisatta*.[26]

In short, in the effort of fortifying its authority as a new modern state, Indonesia necessitated what Gramsci's defines as legitimate and rational, rigid boundary, hegemony approved religions.[27] Adhering to this principle, Indonesian Buddhism in Indonesia was also obliged to be compliant with the State's definition. Buddhayāna, as a blend of Mahāyāna, Theravāda, and even later on, Tantrayāna traditions, was considered to be 'syncretic.' It was under Walubi's verdict that Buddhayāna and its organizations were forced to leave Walubi's membership (1994) as they were seen to be not Buddhist, to be syncretic, and not in line with what was defined to be Indonesian Buddhism.

Sanghyang Adibuddha: A Skillful Compromising

In this section we will be discussing the skillful act of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita and some *panditas* who came up with a *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* in response to the political and religious upheaval in the country after the 1965 coup. Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita and his disciples promulgated the concept of *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* by deriving their reference from the ancient Javanese Buddhist scripture *Sanghyang Kamahayanikan*, thus, rooting in the Indonesian culture. It did not cause so many debates initially. But later on, with the frequent visits from Thai monks who carrying with them a message of purifying the Buddhist teachings, and the sending of Indonesian *bhikkhus* and *samaneras* to studying Buddhism in Thailand and Sri Lanka, opinions began to change. Some of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's disciples who were in the beginning having no objection to the concept and even supporting of the concept, eventually took a different stand and left him and his *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* idea by establishing their own organization. These people mostly belonged to the Theravādans who eventually split from Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's *sangha* affiliation and became the Indonesian Theravāda Sangha. We get a glimpse at the Thai *bhikkhus'* opinion regarding this concept of god through a published diary of a visit to Indonesia for conferring a *bhikkhu* ordination in 1969. In their diary they say that Indonesian Buddhists have tried to deal with the subject of god, but they saw it was not a wise compromise.[28]

The effort to spread the "pure" Buddhist teaching, I suspect, began earlier than the coming of the Thai Buddhist influence on the archipelago. The Dutch theosophists who took the initiative to reintroduce the Buddhist teaching were likely to conceive Buddhism as textual and philosophical religion. Their understanding of the religion, I assume, to be different from that of the popular or living Buddhism as widely practiced in society or, most commonly in villages. This is quite reasonable since these theosophists came from Europe which at the time—the nineteenth century—was somewhat employing the Orientalist mentality: religion is extracted and separated from its socio-cultural context into the form of texts. In Tambiah's words when he talks about Rhys Davids, a well-known Orientalist scholar working on Buddhism propagating a "Pali Text Society mentality"

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26 Ibid.

27 Hidayah, Sita. Ibid., p. 34.

28 Mills, Laurence-Khantipalo, *A Record of Journeys in Indonesia: for the Ordination of Five Bhikkhus at the Great Stupa of Borobudur by Phra Sāsana Sobhana from the 6th of May to the 13th May 2513,* Bangkok: Mahamakut Press, 1971, p. 5.

which "essentialized Buddhism in terms of its 'pristine' teachings."[29] Philosophical teachings were the main concern of these people to be isolated from its ritual aspects.

According to the Thai reformists/puritans, what is "pure" and then, a "true" Buddhism is the one that is based on the *Tipitaka* Pali (Sanskrit: *Tripitaka*) scripture. In this discussion we are focusing on the Theravada tradition since the strong opposition to the conception of the *Sanghyang Adibuddha* was from the Theravadan group. The concept of *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* is not derived from the *Tipitaka* Pali scripture; therefore, it is not a Theravāda teaching or, it is simply "not pure" and "not true" (Theravāda) Buddhism. It is a syncretic (Buddhist) religion. There is even an accusation that Buddhayāna is also adopting the teaching of the *Sai Baba*[30] teaching.[31]

Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita's search for a reference of 'god' in his Buddhist heritage was, I would argue, deeply informed, both consciously and consciously, by his socio-cultural background. Before receiving the meditation guidance and the *bhikkhu* ordination from a well-known meditation master according to the Theravada disciple, he was practicing meditation and also accepting a *sramanera* ordination from a Mahayana teacher and tradition. Kandahjaya assumes that the *bhikkhu* ordination he received within Theravada tradition was made possible by the encouragement and effort of his Mahayana teacher. This exemplary act out of compassion and wisdom inspired Ashin Jinarakkhita's spirituality and strategy in shaping his Indonesian Buddhism.[32] His knowledge and experiences in exploring the spiritual realms were the cumulative results of his engagements with clerics and spiritual practitioners from diverse systems. He acquired a harmonious fusion of rationality and mysticism within his personality. This process of finding of his sense of self might be a source of his route-map towards his finding of the kind of Buddhism that suited him and his understanding of what it is to be an Indonesian Buddhist. His ability to maintain harmony between the two Buddhist traditions - Theravāda and Mahāyāna - might also be informed by his strong conviction that the most appropriate Buddhism to be practiced in Indonesia is the one that is inherited from an Indonesian ancestor.[33] It is the *Siwa-Buddha*, a mixture of different religious traditions (Hinduism and Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna Buddhism) of the ancient time, particularly the Sriwijaya and the Majapahit empires.

I have no proof yet to say that Ashin Jinarakkhita's choosing of his Buddhayāna is mainly in response - and a sort of special (or personal) sentiment - to Sukarno, the first Indonesian president's notion of building an Indonesian characteristics (*kepribadian* Indonesia). But it is tempting to relate his promotion of the *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* by comparing to Sukarno's speech on June 1, 1945, known as the founding of *Pancasila*, that he was doing was only re-discovering the five pearls from the Indonesian soil.[34] *Sanghyang Adibuddha* is not something that is foreign to Buddhists in Indonesia, it is written in the ancient Javanese scripture. What Ashin Jinarakkhita was doing was rediscovering the concept. This might also strengthen his foundation in deciding to

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29 Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 7.

30 Sai Baba is a kind of Hindu modern movement which led by Sai Baba who is believed to be the living incarnation of the god Siva by its followers.

31 http://bhagavant.com/home.php?link=sejarah&tipe=sejarah_buddhisme_Indonesia_6 Retrived: April 5, 2010.

32 Kandahjaya, Hudaya, "Via Kong Hoa Sie to Borobudur," a paper presented at the IABS, Taiwan, June 2011, p. 9.

33 In Juangari, Edij, Ibid., p.185, it is stated that Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita always encouraged his 'intellectual' followers to discover the Buddhist teachings that had already been rooted in the Indonesian culture.

34 Pidato Sukarno "*Lahirnya Pancasila*," also in Soekarno, Ir. Filsafat Pancasila Menurut Bung Karno, Yogyakarta: penerbit Media Pressindo, in Dharmaputera. Eka. *Ibid*., p. 68.

employ the concept; the historical basis that it was originating in the Majapahit Empire. Again, this kingdom, along with Sriwijaya, were the two kingdoms brought up as the examples of the golden era of the Indonesian, by Sukarno in his *Lahirnya Pancasila* speech.[35]

Aside from my assumption, it is reasonable enough to conclude that the promotion of the *Sanghyang Ādibuddha* by Ashin Jinarakkhita was a "skillful means"[36] to response to the State-imposed ideology of the Pancasila's first principle. One must remember that the opposition toward this idea was likely to come after the Thai Buddhism gave much influence to the Theravādan tradition in Indonesia. In addition to this, Ashin Jinarakkhita's form of Buddhism—Buddhayāna Buddhism that embraces different schools of Buddhism - was built upon his cross-cultural spirit of individuality. His conviction of the appropriate adoption of a certain kind of Buddhism to live by in Indonesia was not wavered despite of the strong influence from the Thai Buddhists. It seems too that he was aware of the multi-ethnic Buddhists living in his time, with the biggest population presumably the Chinese. So he did not want to give up his Chinese (Mahāyāna) Buddhist tradition that flowing within his blood. I would conclude by saying that he was building a bridge that uniting different ethnicities in his time; the time of struggling for awakening Buddhism from its long hibernation and with the challenge from the new State to establish its identity in line with the ideological foundation of this new State.

35 Pidato Sukarno *"Lahirnya Pancasila*."

36 Skillful means (*upaya kausalya*) is a Buddhist idiom, coming form the Mahayana philosophical teaching designating a wise thought and/or action to apply a Buddhist teaching in a certain context.

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Suffering, Dhamma Seeds & Videotape: Equity, Interdependence & Culture in Struggles for African Liberation

Kagendo Murungi

Meeting My Spiritual Teacher

I first met Venerable Bhikkhu Buddharakkhita on September 12, 2008, at a workshop that he was giving at the *New York Insight Meditation Center*. I remember having been profoundly struck by his big, bright, tranquil smile along with his zeal for spreading the Dhamma in Africa. I had not known then that an African Buddhist monk even existed! Having tried meditating on my own, without any instruction, at different points in my life I had decided to attend the workshop when a Nigerian friend of mine told me that there was a Ugandan monk who would be giving a workshop in the city that weekend. As a Kenyan, I was even more curious to meet this monk since he was a fellow East African.

Searching for Healing, Balance & Justice

Several years prior to that, I had moved forward from my job in the field of human rights advocacy in order to refocus my professional work on organizing for social justice on local community issues and to completing some outstanding video projects. I had also come to understand that I needed to shift my energy more directly to inner healing and personal growth, and I was eager to find new tools to support me through this process. My previous experience of working with international human rights advocacy organizations had exposed me to a daily bombardment of news about egregious violations of rights along with detailed accounts of extreme human suffering.

In September 2008, I was working as part of a collaborative that was engaged in an applied research project on issues of poverty, housing, discrimination, violence and access to social services for low-income people in New York who were further marginalized by their sexualities and gender expressions. Whenever our research group met, members would share sometimes graphic and deeply disturbing stories of having experienced different types of discrimination and violence, along with various strategies that they had used or were using to survive and heal. We were working to create a safe open space for ourselves where we could build our capacity, both individually and collectively, to identify and prioritize action points on which we could engage in community advocacy initiatives with allied organizations and individuals.

I was therefore in a period of deep personal transformation while also contending with the daily challenges of material survival in New York, which made it perfect timing for me to meet the monk who would become my teacher. Being a social documentarian, I was captivated by the powerful impact of a fellow African wearing the burgundy robes of a monk, and who imparted the teachings of the Buddha with the deep knowledge and authority of one who had dedicated

his life wholly to the path of enlightenment. I was compelled to request his permission to initiate a documentary video project about his story as the first indigenous Ugandan Buddhist monk in the world. My heart was filled with joy when just a few weeks later, Bhante Buddharakkhita facilitated my visit to the *Bhāvanā Society Theravada Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Center* in West Virginia, where he is a resident monk and continues to teach. My work to document his life's work was thus initiated, along with my ongoing relationship with the Uganda Buddhist Center, where I am honored to serve as a member of the Electronic-Board (e-board), comprised of people living in the U.S.

The Path to Inner Happiness & Social Change

At the beginners' silent retreat that Bhante Buddharakkhita led that weekend from October 10-12, 2008, I focused avidly on his teachings as I videotaped each session in the spacious and beautiful *Bhāvanā Society* meditation hall. Since I was new to Buddhism, this was the ideal environment within which I could begin to understand such basic Dhamma tenets as *The Three Refuges* and *The Five Precepts*. As a new student of the Dhamma, my discovery of *The Four Noble Truths* at this time was eye-opening. My past and present experiences as a social justice activist had familiarized me with acute suffering but like any other human being, I had always been aware of my own personal suffering, and sought ways to bring it to an end, even while sometimes doubting that this was possible.

Listening to Bhante Buddharakkhita's instruction on *The Four Noble Truths* captured my imagination as an activist, artist and lay-feminist. As Bhante Buddharakkhita instructs (Buddharakkhita:4):

> Wisdom (*Panna* in Pali) has the characteristic of penetrating the real, specific nature of phenomena, its function is to illuminate the objective field, its manifestation is non-confusion; and the Four Noble Truths, is its supporting condition. Cultivating wisdom in daily life entails the understanding of the Four Noble Truths. It is our reliable source of wisdom and understanding. The Four Noble Truths are: Suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the Path leading to its cessation. Wisdom means seeing in detail the true nature of things. What is the true nature of things? All conditioned things are impermanent, unsatisfactory and selfless. Wisdom unfolds in three progressive levels namely: listening, reflection and meditation.

One unifying truth that I had encountered throughout my years of organizing for social change was the preponderance of suffering and the apparent elusiveness of joy for socially marginalized groups and individuals. Studying and practicing the Dhamma had the potential to transform my personal consciousness through an applied understanding of *The Four Noble Truths*, that life means suffering, that the origin of suffering is attachment, that the cessation of suffering is attainable, and that there is a path to the cessation of suffering.

My inner path to peace as an activist within various communities could enrich and transform the ways in which I engaged with those communities and have a positive impact on the initiatives and movements that I was a part of. I experienced a profound sense of relief in my having found a new teacher whose instruction centralized a path to peace and happiness. It was also an exciting

new opportunity for me to connect with the *Uganda Buddhist Center* as an innovative African initiative working to transform our post-colonial societies and helping to bring true inner joy and peace to African people. This first day of videotaping Bhante Buddharakkhita's retreats signaled the beginning of my service in support of his work to spread Dhamma seeds in Africa, via the *Uganda Buddhist Center*. I was inspired and energized by the revolutionary potential that lay in my path as a student of the Dhamma.

Applying Spiritual Consciousness in Activism

It is not uncommon for social justice activists and human rights advocates to suffer from burn out due to a lack of balance between their own self-care and their work to positively transform their communities. One of the first things I had shared with Bhante Buddharakkhita during one of our interview sessions at Bhāvanā Society was that I had worked as a human rights advocate for several years while struggling through deeply challenging periods of frustration, unhappiness and personal duress in the process. Bhante Buddharakkhita had paused and looked at me with great compassion as we spoke in the library that day, surrounded by Buddhist texts. He told me quite simply, that you cannot fight for someone else's happiness if you do not first have peace in your own mind.

I have had numerous conversations with fellow activists over the years, about the need to do our social justice work holistically, in ways that support multiple dimensions of our selves. We had discussed many times that we needed to pursue our organizing work within contexts that acknowledged and supported our needs as spiritual beings. Our professional and organizing environments also needed to support our healing, growth and personal development as activists doing organizing work within the prevailing oppressive social contexts that we were fighting to transform. We understood that this was at least as important as the missions of the organizations with which we worked and the action points of the initiatives to which we were committed. I had internalized an earlier lesson from one of my teachers, Jacqui Alexander (Alexander:15):

> All of the elements with which feminism has been preoccupied—including transnationalism, gender and sexuality, experience, history, memory, subjectivity, and justice—are contained within this metaphysic that uses Spirit knowing as the mechanism of making the world intelligible. But primarily because experience has been understood in purely secular terms, and because the secular has been divested of the Sacred and the spiritual divested of the political, this way of knowing is not generally believed to have the capacity to instruct feminism in the United States in any meaningful way, in spite of the work of feminist theologians and ethicists.

The sense of justice, balance and equanimity that I had sought as a student and practitioner of feminism, human rights and African liberation struggles was linked to my daily spiritual practice. Valuing, building and developing an understanding of the interdependence between our inner spiritual worlds and our movements for socio-political transformation as citizens of African countries was essential to our widespread transformation of the material and spiritual realities of oppressed and marginalized groups and individuals within our communities. Learning to calm and discipline my mind for the sake of developing a deep and abiding mindfulness of the present moment devoid of delusion could only benefit the causes to which I was committed for social justice and peace.

Discovering a Necessary Refuge

During the few days that I was able to visit *Bhāvanā Society* in 2008, both during and after the weekend retreat, I was exposed for the first time in my life to the Theravada forest meditation tradition of Buddhism as well as the experience of being in a community of monastics, and living according to their rules. I witnessed and became part of a daily practice of *The Three Refuges* (Planting Dhamma Seeds 2006: 39) through the process of living for a few days according to the rhythms of the monastery, and arranging daily to secure some of Bhante Buddharakkhita's precious time for several interview sessions on the monastery grounds.

The notion of taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha appealed to me as a feminist because of the commonalities that I saw between the historical challenges faced by gender justice activists and bhikkhus as teachers of the Dhamma. As an African feminist student of an African bhikkhu and as a social documentary producer interested in supporting the growth of the *Uganda Buddhist Center* through this medium, I wanted to merge these worlds analytically in order to develop a deeper understanding of my particular responsibilities as a student of the Dhamma. This experience would continue to anchor me far beyond the bucolic grounds of *Bhāvanā Society*.

Third World Feminism & the Dhamma

One of the most significant challenges to increasing third world feminist consciousness as well as to spreading the Dhamma in Africa is the perception of both as foreign, marginal, and threatening. Bhante Buddharakkhita describes having been perceived as a "mad man" in public when he first returned to Uganda, a predominantly Christian country, because of his monk robes (Buddharakkhita:27):

> One morning as I left my hotel room, I walked past two women. I engaged in walking meditation, very slowly walking back and forth in a 20 foot path, with my gaze fixed only a couple of steps ahead of my feet. I overheard the two ladies arguing. One said, "This man is a mad man! The other one said, "A mad man cannot afford to stay in such a good hotel. He cannot be a mad man!" As I was returning to the hotel, two children looked at me fearfully and ran away saying, "This man is going to eat us!"

Bhante Buddharakkhita had been engaged in something very typical for a Buddhist practitioner, while dressed in the typical manner of a Buddhist monk. In the case of third world feminism, there are similar distortions in public perceptions of its philosophy and application. When a lot of people come across the term "feminism," they imagine that it is a Western separatist movement, which seeks to empower privileged white women while oppressing men and giving no consideration to the realities of people of color in the U.S. or third world countries. As Chandra Mohanty explains (Mohanty, Russo and Torres: 4)

> The idea of imagined community is useful because it leads us away from essentialist notions of third world feminist struggles, suggesting political rather than biological or cultural bases for alliance. Thus, it is not color or sex which constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather, it is the *way* we think about race, class, gender—the political links we choose to make among and between struggles. Thus potentially women of all colors (including white

women) can align themselves with and participate in these imagined communities. However, clearly our relation to and centrality in particular struggles depend on our different, often conflictual, locations and histories.

The marginalization of both Buddhism and feminism in the African context stems from a range of factors, including false notions of what each philosophy represents, which leads to an unwillingness or hesitation by members of the general public to want to learn more or identify with either one. Third world feminist principles are premised on the understanding that the needs of the poorest, most marginalized and oppressed groups in society must be centralized as a pre-condition for the realization of freedom and social justice for all. Sadly, throughout Africa as well as internationally, women consistently occupy the lowest social and economic rungs. This means that only the realization of fairness, justice and equality for third world women will result in social justice and peace for all people. Similarly, because of the daily deprivation, suffering and injustice that that they endure and resist, the most marginalized and oppressed groups in society are also the most likely to be receptive to the Dhamma. The teachings of the Buddha offer a daily practice along with detailed instructions on how to bring about an end to suffering in this lifetime, rather than an escape or a fleeting pacification that fails to truly transform their spiritual consciousness.

Due to their potential for fundamental social change, both Buddhism and feminism are easily sidelined and scapegoated by African governments and easily ignored by the majority of nongovernmental organizations. This makes it very difficult for feminist and Buddhist organizations and initiatives to access the necessary monetary and human resources to support their critical work for social transformation. Another challenge that both feminists and Buddhists face is the basic need for the production of new and locally accessible multimedia educational materials. These materials then also need to be translated into the numerous indigenous African languages for wider accessibility, along with the European colonial languages of instruction spoken throughout the continent. In both Buddhist and feminist organizations and initiatives, there is also the ongoing need for the involvement and training of a growing, sustainable, and renewable pool of qualified instructors, who are able to support the teaching needs of the community and support pedagogical development. Both Buddhist and feminist organizations and initiatives face the challenge of creating more effective, accessible, and sustainable approaches to their daily work to connect with members of the societies in which they are based.

Facing Challenges to Daily Practice

Inevitably, the three years following my time at *Bhāvanā Society* came to include a series of unexpected and unplanned adventures. These experiences encompassed the regular daily challenges of struggling to survive and thrive in the post-colonial, post-global recession cities and towns in which I lived. Struggling to pay the monthly rent for overpriced New York housing, transitioning from one job to the next, working to secure new consultancies, pushing to complete outstanding production projects while initiating new ones, fundraising and grant-writing for projects, collaborating with colleagues and allies in social justice initiatives, maintaining relationships with friends and family, coping with personal loss and mourning, and making time for my daily practice among other daily stressors and distractions almost brought me to a standstill on numerous occasions.

However, as the incredibly humbling experience of writing this paper reminded me, it is the process that matters—how I continue to sustain and develop my practice to cope with these daily challenges in order to attain peace and maintain equanimity. According to Thich Nhat Hanh (Baldoquín:61):

> The fact is that, thanks to suffering, you have a chance to cultivate your understanding and your compassion. Without suffering there is no way you could learn to be compassionate. This is why suffering is noble. You should not allow suffering to overwhelm you, but if you know how to look deeply into suffering and learn from it, then you have the wisdom of understanding and compassion.

Sometimes when I have felt uninspired, demoralized or stuck, I have read books, attended talks and workshops, and watched numerous films that help to put me in touch with the historical and contemporary social justice initiatives of various socially marginalized and oppressed groups. These resources offer a bounty of fresh perspectives and new organizing tools that I can utilize, along with a broad range of perspectives and visions for social transformation.

A precious resource that I recently discovered is Canyon Sam's book *Sky Train: Tibetan Women on the Edge of History*, in which she interviews four women who survived the Chinese occupation of Tibet. There are many lessons to be learned from the tools that these women utilized to survive during their resistance against the Chinese occupation.

Lessons from the Tibetan Women's Uprising

When the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) invaded Lhasa in March 1959, having invaded Tibet in 1950, many Tibetan men were already part of the resistance movement in other parts of the country. The majority of remaining Tibetan men managed to escape into neighboring India, which left the vast majority of women and children behind. The Tibetan Women's Uprising on March 12, 1959, marked their stance against the Chinese invasion. Thousands of women, including the wives of government officials, ordinary women and nuns, stood in peaceful protest in front of the Potola Palace in Lhasa and many were arrested and imprisoned indefinitely. Some women were beaten to death then and there.

The tremendous courage that it took for the women to conduct this peaceful protest in itself embodies the absence of delusion, indicating a practice of right mindfulness according to *The Noble Eightfold Path*. The willingness of these Tibetan freedom fighters to stand up against the Chinese army shows their acknowledgement that life means suffering. Their awareness of the brutality to which they would be subjected despite their peaceful protest indicates a conscious acceptance that acceptance of impermanence. Their preparedness to unite as women from different socio-economic backgrounds is a practice of non-self and demonstrates the limitlessness available once we detach from notions of individuality.

The courageous women, children and few men that remained in Tibet were forced into slave labor and concentration camps. They faced unspeakable brutalities and suffered tremendously at the hands of the Chinese military. With the men gone, the women were left vulnerable to rape, torture, daily beatings and starvation, and forced to face numerous humiliations. Remaining true to

their Buddhist values and cultural practices under extreme duress, made it possible for the women to survive and to resist. Central to this survival was the deep interdependence that they established collectively, along with the practice of compassion, non-violence and generosity with each other. As Canyon Sam reflects (Sam: 51):

> What did the potato mean? She had slipped it to me clandestinely, with a wink and a nod, even though it was only the two of us in the room… Perhaps the potato was a clandestine gift, a way women communicated when talking was impossible. In an inhuman environment, with brutal guards driving you to perform, starving and humiliating you, with people dropping dead every day, such an act, slipped past the guard's eye, kept not just the body but a sense of humanity alive. A small private generosity translated to an act of solidarity with another woman. And an act of resistance against the will of one's captors.

Mola's gesture in the excerpt above is a vestige of one survival mechanism; the practice of generosity, that she had utilized during her years of survival and resistance in the concentration camps. Her generosity with Sam is an extension of the interdependence that made it possible for Tibetan women to maintain their spirits through incredible hardship.

Resilience & Versatility

Learning about the resilience and versatility of Tibetan women freedom fighters continues to inspire me to deepen my practice and study of the Dhamma. It has also given me some useful insights into particular strategic advantages inherent in working from the margins, whether as a feminist, a Buddhist or a Buddhist feminist. Applying these insights to challenges faced by the *Uganda Buddhist Center* in its work to spread the Dhamma in Africa, I am beginning to understand some of them as opportunities for creative solutions. A margin-to-center approach offers a unique perspective on challenges we face on our path for social change. As bell hooks recalls (hooks:xvi):

> Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked from both the outside in and the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as the margin. We understood both. This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of a whole universe, a main body made up of both margin and center.

An understanding of the *Three Marks of Existence—impermanence*, *suffering,* and *non-self, along with this type margin-to-center perspective gives us the flexibility to understand that our current situation is in a constant state of flux. With regard to fundraising, for example, this guarantee of ongoing change along with the application of multiple strategies, sustains our hope for success in generating financial resources. We have the capacity to innovate new resource generating initiatives as well as to utilize traditional approaches such as applying for possible foundation grants as a non-profit organization. Being on the margins forces us to be more creative than larger, more established institutions with government recognition and easy access to funding.*

On the issue of developing our capacity for a larger impact on the African continent, because of how effective the study and practice of the Dhamma is, once they understand the philosophy, people are drawn to join the sangha. People volunteer their skills, time and energy in numerous ways in order to support the growth of the Uganda Buddhist Center, without which it would be

much more difficult to do our work. In other words financial resources are just one form of energy that sustains our work. Similarly, when people witness the impact of the study and daily practice of the Dhamma in their lives, they spread the word to their families and friends. Family members and friends who witness our transformation are then compelled to find out more about what it is that is making us so happy and peaceful.

Our presence in the communities in which we live allows us to teach by example as we strive to move through the world with compassion, non-violence and generosity. Finally, our investment of resources in our local communities draws new people to the sangha. The Uganda Buddhist Peace School has a scholarship fund that provide free education for children ages five to eleven, about moral or ethical conduct. Our borehole provides clean, fresh drinking water, which is available for the entire surrounding community. Both these resources serve to draw new people to our grounds and to the meditation hall, which increases the likelihood of more people attending meditation workshops.

Documenting Solutions

There is no doubt that meeting Venerable Bhikkhu Buddharakkhita transformed my consciousness in fundamental and enduring ways. I am now in post-production for my documentary about him and his work to spread Dhamma seeds in Africa. I have captured numerous hours of footage over the past three years and I look forward to beginning to make new edits as I continue to log the material that I already have. One thing I have definitely learned from Bhante Buddharakkhita during the time that I have known him is the utility of humor as a pedagogical tool. To this end, some of the footage I have gathered is actually quite entertaining and I look forward to sharing it with the world in service to the work of spreading Dhamma seeds in Africa and beyond. As Bhante Buddharakkhita reminds us (Buddharakkhta:1):

> The Buddha said, "Think not lightly of evil, saying, 'It will not come to me.' Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the untrained (unwise) person, gathering it little by little, fills himself with evil." Our daily life is filled with actions, words and mostly thoughts, which have a cumulative effect as we interact with others. For instance, if we behave in unskillful ways that cause suffering for oneself, others, and both, then this will gather force with time and in turn become our habit, character or value. The Buddha gave a second inspiring phrase: "think not lightly of good, saying, 'It will not come to me.' Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the trained person, the wise man, gathering it little by little, fills himself with good.

On the last day of my first visit to *Bhāvanā Society*, decided to conduct a fun experiment about the lesson of the water pot, that Bhante Buddharakkhita instructed me to carry out in order to deepen my understanding of the Buddha's teaching. I decided to videotape it because I thought it would provide some good B-roll for my documentary. He directed me to compare the experience of filling two separate vessels with water, one with a wide rim and the other with a narrow rim. I decided to run water off the low roof of a shed on the monastery grounds. I found two appropriate clear containers and some larger buckets that I would use to draw water from a tap outside the main building. I had to make several trips back and forth, between the two structures, which also taught me something about patience and sustained effort in the process. It was a beautiful late afternoon and I enjoyed myself.

I set up my camcorder at a safe distance from the water and set up first one vessel then the next, at the base of the shed, right underneath the roof. I then proceeded to pour bucket after bucket of water onto the roof, while videotaping the drop-by-drop process by which the different rimmed vessels filled up with water. The vessel with the wide rim filled up very quickly since more water was able to collect inside it. The vessel with the narrow rim took longer to fill up, since it was harder for the water to fall directly into it. Observing this, I thought about something that Bhante Buddharakkhita had said to me on the previous day. He had told me that being at the monastery was like having a wide rimmed vessel, while being out in the world as a lay person was like having a narrow rimmed vessel.

The water symbolized the practice of skillful qualities. It was easier to accumulate skillful qualities within the context of the peaceful, disciplined environment of the monastery, surrounded by monastics than in the outside world. However, the drops would still eventually fill the vessel, so it was essential to maintain my practice when I returned home and to continue to develop my skillful qualities through mindfulness. I came to understand that Bhante Buddharakkhita had also wanted me to witness for my self, the way in which *The Ten Perfections* that we cultivate through the study and practice of the Dhamma, function in practice. Generosity, ethical conduct, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, resolve, loving-kindness and equanimity would develop within my mind if cultivated if I continued to practice and study the Dhamma.

I learned later on that Bhante Buddharakkhita himself had conducted a similar experiment years before. I found out about his experience when I read the transcript of a Dhamma talk on Patience, that he gave at the International Buddhist Society of Pennsylvania, on January 2, 2010. As Bhante Buddharakkhita had shared with those who attended his Dhamma talk that day:

> I wrote a book, "Drop by Drop," using these qualities as a framework for daily life, moment to moment. Each time we choose to practice a skillful quality, it is like a drop in a bucket. But don't underestimate them; drop-by-drop the bucket will be full—of a quality such as loving-kindness or equanimity. Also, never underestimate unskillful qualities. Similarly, drop-by-drop the bucket will be full of an unskillful quality, such as greed, attachment, misconduct, anger, and other imbalanced states of life. It is all up to us what we do. The Buddha gave us options.

I am deeply thankful to have Bhante Buddharakkhita as my spiritual teacher, and honored to work with him to support the work of the *Uganda Buddhist Center*. I look forward to completing the documentary that we are co-producing about his story as the first indigenous African Buddhist monk, and his work to spread Dhamma seeds in Africa.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experiences and learning process with you.

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful.

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Tales, Trials and Tribulations of Teaching Dhamma in Uganda

Ven. Bhikkhu Buddharakkhita[1]

The following is an examination of various approaches to pioneering Buddhist teachings in parts of the world that are new to Buddhism such as Uganda, East Africa. In this era, Buddhism is no longer constrained to its birthplace in India and other Asian countries. Buddhism reached Africa in the nineteen century and was introduced even more recently in Uganda, a predominantly Christian country.

While undergoing this process many questions arise. How can Buddhism flourish amongst people having no experience with Asian culture and Buddhist traditions? How can one avoid conflict with existing religions? How can one become motivated to teach Buddhism? How can Buddhism be introduced and assimilated into society while coexisting with traditional culture? Which of the Buddha's teachings best advance Buddhist education?

Finally, this account explores the obstacles to and solutions for disseminating Buddhism in Uganda. Although Buddhism is still new to this African nation, Uganda holds a great potential for the advancement of Buddhism. As with all people, there is much suffering on the continent of Africa, as well as the need to be free from suffering, to gain inner-peace, true happiness and ultimate liberation.

Introduction

Uganda has a population of approximately 32 million[2] and is located on the equator, in East Africa. Buddhism was born in Uganda when Venerable Buddharakkhita established the Uganda Buddhist Centre (UBC) near Lake Victoria in Entebbe, April 2005. The Centre is a major initiative in the heart of Africa, intending to provide a stable source of the Buddha's teachings (Dhamma) in Uganda. We consider the Dhamma to be a form of medicine that can end suffering and transform ordinary human beings into compassionate and wise beings. The UBC maintains a base for monastics and Dhamma leaders (laypersons) to preserve and transmit the Buddha's teachings throughout Uganda and Africa as a whole. The Uganda Buddhist Centre includes a temple where people gather to receive and practice spiritual instruction, learn meditation and yoga, and offer service to the community through the UBC's activities and projects.

[1] *President-Founder and Abbot of the Uganda Buddhist Centre; www.UgandaBuddhistCenter.org* UgandaBuddhist-Centre@gmail.com Please contact Uganda Buddhist Centre, if you wish to assist us in spreading the Dhamma in Africa.

[2] CIA - The World Fact book - Uganda. Available on the Internet, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ug.html (Cited 2010-08-30). Last updated on August 30, 2010.

Three Stages of Introducing Buddhism in Uganda

While introducing Buddhist Dhamma (Truth), The Uganda Buddhist Centre has passed through several phases, some evoked honor while others proved quite challenging.

According to Arthur Schopenhauer,

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident…"[3]

Why? Because we all tend to regard what is "new" and "unusual" with skepticism, resulting from our western upbringing, which teaches us to view the world rationally.

Stage 1 - Ridicule

One bright sunny afternoon after a heavy downpour, while walking around Wandegeya Township (a suburb of Uganda's capital, Kampala) with my attendant, I requested to him to buy a sitting cloth. Whilst visiting a shop stall in the market, my attendant asked for the price of the cloth and the shopkeeper responded with another question, "What is your religion?"

"Buddhism," I answered.

"Why are you wearing bark cloth[4]?" she questioned me again.

I told her my robes are made of cotton not bark cloth, then she asked, "Do you believe in God?

"Yeah, I believe in the Four Noble Truths," I replied.

"You are just kidding around in your religion," she laughed.

I smiled.

She said, "My God is stronger than yours! I am saved, a born again Christian."

I wanted to tell her that in Buddhism, we are born again, and again, until we reach final enlightenment, but decided against opening that "can of worms."

She requested me to: "Please raise both your hands upwards."

I refrained.

Emphatically, she declared, "I am going to pray for you and prove to you that our God is stronger than yours, the Buddha. And as a proof of the power of God, you are definitely going to fall on the ground!"

I decided to leave the scene. Personally, I wondered what falling down on ground, and perhaps hurting me, had to do with "loving your neighbor as yourself." Such incidents would teach me patience as I continued to meet and relate to many people holding differing views.

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[3] Available on the internet. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), a German philosopher known for his pessimism and philosophical clarity.

[4] Bark cloth, made from tree bark, used in ceremonial rituals and by royalty in the Baganda Kingdom (the most populous ethnic group in Uganda). Bark cloth's appearance is similar to the rust-brown-colored robes worn by Theravada monastics. Buddhist monastics are forbidden from wearing bark cloth.

Stage 2 - Opposition: Searching for the Baby Buddha Again

After having settled in our new property for several months, I felt a sense of ease and peace. I felt hopeful now having planted the Dhamma seed, which only needed nurturing, by watering it and removing weeds.

Our neighbors and numerous local people began visiting us, however, some seemed to fear approaching the small Temple. I had built a small room for the Buddha statue and the rest of the space was open without walls for us to practice meditation. Whenever people saw the Buddha statue for the first time from a distance, they would not go near it.

Once, prior to a visit by Uganda's President to the Vice President's house (1 km from the Temple), soldiers came to our village for security reasons. Rumors were circulating that the Uganda Buddhist Centre had kidnapped a baby and was keeping it inside the small house. Lo and behold, the soldiers came searching for that baby. They broke the front door and anxiously inspected the entire place. They were trying to rescue the rumored "baby in captivity". Dismayed and disappointed, they found no baby, only a Buddha statue. The soldiers proceeded to sit on the porch and drink alcohol the whole night until morning. After they left the next morning, I repaired the door.

Stage 3 - Self-Evident: Increasingly More People Join With Us

It seems the Uganda Buddhist Centre is now in the second stage, heading toward the third stage as many people have embraced Buddhism in Uganda. One even painted the Dhamma wheel on his gate.

Various Approaches to Teaching Buddhism in Uganda

While introducing Buddhism it is important to develop the "Four Bases of Success or the Four Roads to Success"[5]. The stronger the Four Bases of Success, the more we are determined to accomplish our missionary work, and to teach by precept and example. We need to "walk the talk" and to promote cooperation, not competition. There is a need to focus on the main teaching of the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths, and to develop a conceptual framework for disseminating Buddhist teachings. As more people embrace Buddhism, remind the newcomers about Freedom of Inquiry.

It is very important to use the available technology in order to promote the Dhamma to the wider community. It is necessary to impart Dhamma education to the young people, the future generation. Finally, it is necessary to lead by example and to express compassion in action through social work. These methods are explored here.

[5] Samyutta Nikaya: Iddhipādā Samyutta. Chapter: 51. 20 / S V 268-9

Developing the Four Bases of Success

1. **Chanda - Desire to Act:** One must have the inspiration and aspiration to spread Buddhism in the new land. Without this initial spark or vision, it is impossible to spread the Dhamma. "No man can be a good teacher unless he has feelings of warm affection towards his pupils and a genuine desire to impart to them what he believes to be of value."[6]

   Is the desire to teach Buddhism in new lands, another form of attachment? Well, we call this kind of desire "desire to be desireless" which leads to happiness as contrasted with desires which lead to more suffering. Finally, once attaining enlightenment, there should be no more desires, including the desire to spread Buddhism in new lands.

2. **Viriya - Effort: Three Kinds of Effort**

   A. Initial Effort is the first effort to establish and teach the Dhamma. This is very important in the initial stages of establishing Dhamma Centres. We must apply effort to accomplish whatever needs to be done.

   B. Sustained Effort: Sometimes there are difficulties that arise with staff, devotees and general management of the Temple. One should arouse this kind of effort to overcome any difficulty that might arise on the way.

   C. Non-stop Effort: It is very important to have the determination not to give up the Dhamma projects until they are successfully completed.

4. **Citta - Mind:** One needs to focus and concentrate on spreading the Dhamma. It is important to prioritize the projects. Do you want to emphasize teaching meditation, or social work, or both? I found that concentrating on one particular project at a time provides the opportunities and resources to plan and successfully implement projects.

5. **Vīmaṃsā - Discernment, Wisdom, and Understanding:** It is very important to constantly discern, examine and evaluate successes and failures. This kind of wise discernment is necessary in order to identify weaknesses and to overcome failure. It also helps to identify opportunities to improve one's success.

For instance, at the Uganda Buddhist Centre[7], SWOT Analysis elucidates the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the Uganda Buddhist Centre. This, in turn, gives us a clearer picture of the current state of Buddhism in Uganda.

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6 Bertrand Russell, English logician and Philosopher (1872-1970).
7 Available on the internet: www.UgandaBuddhistCenter.org.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats:

SWOT Analysis of the Uganda Buddhist Centre (UBC)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• UBC is only Buddhist temple in Uganda. • Founded by Ugandan monk. • Meditation programs attract local and international practitioners. • Convenience of close proximity to Entebbe International Airport. • Beautiful, quiet environment conducive to teaching and practicing the Dhamma.	• Not yet self-sufficient and sustainable due to lack of human and financial resources. • Some people associated with the Temple are motivated by a desire to travel overseas seeking greener pastures, rather than by Dhamma. • Transportation problems for local visitors without personal vehicles.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• UBC provides a model for introducing the Buddha's teachings, in addition to establishing meditation centres and schools that propagate the Dhamma throughout Africa.	• Due to no exposure to Dhamma, many locals associate Buddhism with witchcraft, responding fearfully and negatively to this erroneous view of Buddhism. • Some people have hidden agendas motivated by greed, believing that UBC can open up greener pastures.

Fig 1: SWOT Analysis of the Uganda Buddhist Centre in Entebbe, Uganda

Teaching by Precept and Example:

The Buddha taught by precept and example. In order to teach the Dhamma, one needs to act as a role model for others. We need to live a life that exemplifies Buddhist tenants and ethical conduct. We must purify our physical and verbal behaviors. Once others have confidence in our own appropriate behaviors they observe, they will listen to the Dhamma we teach. At this stage, a teacher must have the ability to teach and convince their listeners. Once the listener notices that the Dhamma is applicable in their own life, they will take it into their heart and mind to apply it in their daily life and perhaps become your disciple.

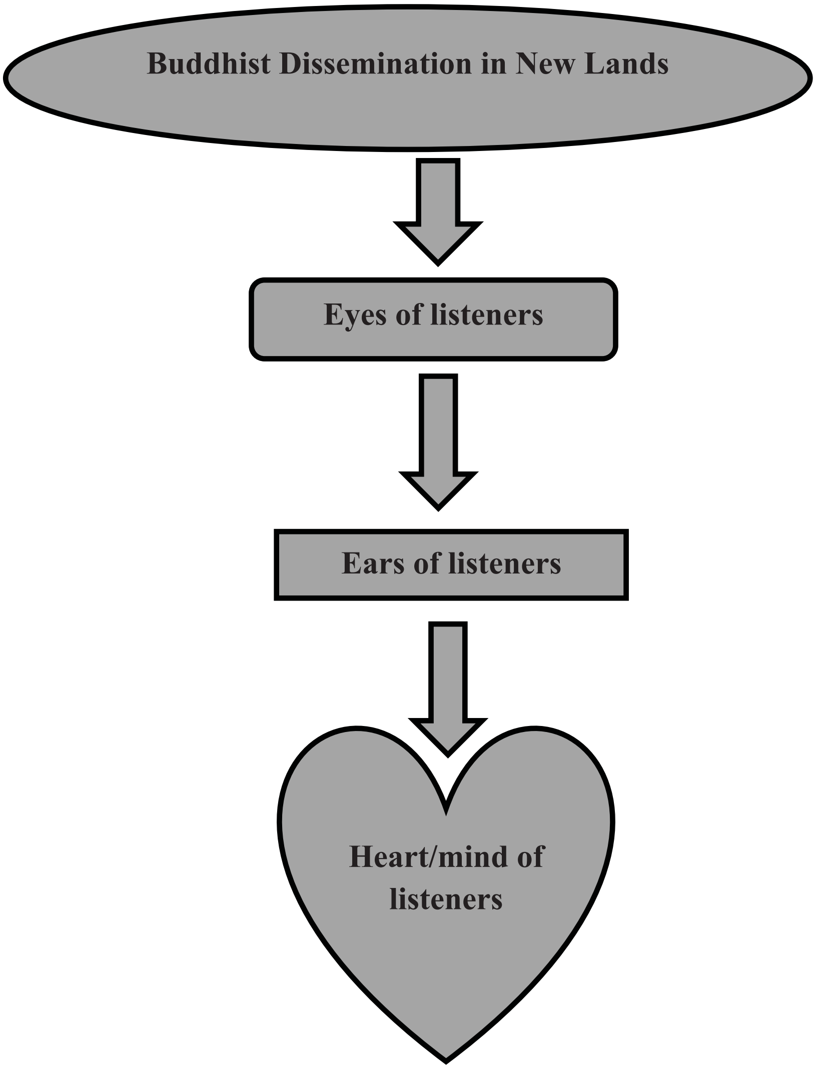


Fig. 2: Pathways of the Dhamma in new lands

Cooperation, Not Competition

Teaching Buddhism in new lands requires a lot of cooperation with other religious communities in the country, rather than competition. Most of the well-established and well-organized religions are very difficult to compete with due to their centralized nature. They have an abundance of financial and human resources. When teaching the Dhamma, one must be open to all religions, never quarrelling with their followers. We need to form a platform for discussion such as inter-faith dialogues or inter-spiritual interactions. Personally, I have given Dhamma talks at Christian Universities in Uganda and Brazil. The audiences were very interested in learning about Buddhism, which was new to them.

Focus on the Buddha's Main Teaching: The Four Noble Truths

All Buddha's teachings are summarized in the Four Noble Truths. These teachings center on a single theme of suffering. Everywhere in the world, there is suffering. The Buddha formulated his teaching akin to the ancient Indian way of treating disease. The doctor would diagnose the disease, its causes, and the cure. In the same way, the Buddha taught the way out of suffering by using the fourfold formula in the Satipatthāna Sutta[8].

- The Noble Truth of Suffering: Birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental displeasure, despair, association of the hateful, separation from the beloved and not getting what one desires and the five aggregates of clinging are suffering.
- The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering: Craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, and craving for non-existence.
- The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering: The state of true happiness, inner-peace and final liberation (Nibbāna).
- The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering: The path leading to the cessation of suffering is the Middle Path (avoiding extremes). Here the two extremes are sensual indulgence and self-mortification.

The Noble Eightfold Path

- Right Understanding
- Right Thought
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Mindfulness
- Right Concentration

When we practice the Four Noble Truths, each one of them reveals the Buddha's mission statement to inner-peace and ultimate happiness. When we cultivate the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path that lead to the end of suffering, we come to understand suffering. Once we understand suffering, we abandon the cause of suffering. When we abandon the cause of suffering, we finally realize ultimate happiness.

We must develop a conceptual framework to effectively propagate the Dhamma. First, the Dhamma Leaders - monastics and laypeople - (sender) must undergo the necessary training and practice of the Noble Eightfold Path (content). Then, ascertain the method of delivery (channel) that is suitable to the audience, after identifying the target audience (receiver).

[8] Majjhima Nikāya: 10. Translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Conceptual Framework of Buddhism Dissemination[9]

SENDER	CONTENT	CHANNEL	RECEIVER
Self-Training **Sangha:** • Monastics • Lay Devotees	**Buddha's Teaching** • Right Understanding • Right Thought • Right Speech • Right Action • Right Livelihood • Right Effort • Right Mindfulness • Right Concentration	**Methods** 1. **Individual** • Home visit • Prayer (reflection) 2. **Group** • Retreat • Ethical camps 3. **Mass Media** • Networking • Cable TV • Broadcasting • DVD, CD, MP3, MP4, etc. • Books and journals	**Target Audience** 1. **Government Sector** • Education • Military • Social welfare • Administrator 2. **Non-Government Sector** • Non-profit organizations • Teachers and students • Parents and children 3. **Sangha Sector** • Temples • Monasteries • Meditation centers

Fig. 3: Dissemination of Buddhism in Globalized World

Remind Newcomers to Buddhism about Freedom of Inquiry

The Buddha encouraged all to understand the teaching experientially rather than to be swayed by blind faith. He said we are free to test him as well as his teachings.[10] All are free to inquire in order to clear any clouds of doubt. It is not necessary to accumulate droves of devotees with blind faith. The Buddha gave us the criterion for accepting any teaching in the Kālāma Sutta,[11]

"…Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias toward a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.'"

"But when you know for yourselves that these things are immoral, these things are blameworthy and these things are censured by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to the ruin and sorrow - Then indeed do you reject them."

"When you know for yourselves that these things are moral, these things are blameless, and these things are praised by the wise, these things when performed and undertaken, conduce to the well-being and happiness - Then do you live and act accordingly..."

[9] Extracted and modified from the Dissemination of Buddhism in Globalized World, presented by Somsuda Pupatana PhD. at the Fourth World Buddhist Sangha Youth General Conference in 2009 in Thailand.
[10] Majjhima Nikāya : Vimasaka Sutta : 47.
[11] Anguttara Nikāya : 3.65, PTS: A i 188.

In this discourse, the Buddha taught about self-examination and reflection. He encouraged experiential knowledge. Personally, this open invitation to question the Buddha's teaching was very appealing. I am sure this would intrigue newcomers to Buddhism to ask questions and openly discuss the Dhamma. When people ask questions, try to be patient and not angry. Many people want to know whether Buddhists believe in God and are curious about Buddhist prayers and practices.

Meditation or Medication?

Sometimes I meet African people who ask what I have been doing in the United States. When I tell them, I am attending a meditation retreat and teaching meditation they often associate my meditation practice with suffering. They continuously mispronounce meditation as "medication" and due to their misunderstanding ask, "What kind of disease do you have?"

Actually, they are not too far from the truth when misinterpreting "meditation" as "medication." Mindfulness practices and insight meditation (Vipassanā) certainly help to prevent, relieve and remove mental dis-ease. This reminds me of a bumper sticker that says, "Mindfulness a day, keeps suffering away!"

Utilizing Available Technology to Promote the Dhamma

It is very useful to employ technology such as social media and the Internet to promote and propagate the Dhamma.

Dhamma Education for Young People

Involve young people, especially children, when they get involved their parents will follow. We should offer universal teachings that are common to all religions, namely:

- **Universal Love:** Loving kindness is the quality of the heart and mind that seeks the welfare and happiness of other beings. Refer to the Metta Sutta[12] (discourse on loving-friendliness) where the Buddha said: Let not anyone deceive another, neither should one despise another anywhere, nor wish ill of each other through hatred and sense repulsion."
- **Social Values:** The Buddha taught thirty-eight Blessings which serve as guidelines to developing and maintaining social values such as: respecting and supporting one's parents. In the Maha-mangala Sutta[13] (the great discourse on blessings), the Buddha said, "…giving away in charity, leading a life of righteousness, fostering of kinsfolk and blameless activities, this is the highest blessing…" In Buddhism, the emphasis is on cultivating blessings as opposed to expecting blessings to come from others.

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[12] Suttanipata, Uragavagga (1-8), Text and translation into English by A.N Jayawickrama, 2001.
[13] Khuddhakapatha (Khp 5); Sutta Nipata, Culavagga (2-4).

- **Ethical Conduct**: The Buddha gave advice to lay people in the Sigāvada Sutta[14] (discourse on laypersons' ethics). For example, parents must keep their children from evil, support them in behaving well, teach them some skills, find a suitable spouse, and in due time hand over their heritage. Sons and daughters also have duties to perform for their parents. "Having supported me, I will support them, I will perform their duties, I will keep the family tradition, I will be worthy of inheritance and after my parent's death, I will distribute gift (merits) on their behalf. The discourse offers other moral behaviors between parents and children, teachers and pupils, religious leaders and lay followers, husband and wife, and employers and employees.

- **Mental Culture:** Through mindfulness practice, one's mind is purified of greed, hatred and delusion. These three mental states cause suffering that affects all beings irrespective of their religious or spiritual background. The Buddha expounded on the various benefits of cultivating right mindfulness in the Satipathāna Sutta[15] (discourse on the four foundations of mindfulness), "...for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attaining of the true way, the realizing of Nibbāna…"

Social Work

Establish projects that benefit the entire community where your Dhamma center is located. For instance, at the Uganda Buddhist Centre we established a borehole and offer water to our community. In this way, we are practicing compassion in action.

Trials and Tribulations of Teaching Buddhism: From Venerable to Vulnerable

Spreading the Dhamma in new lands is not only interesting but also challenging. Being a missionary monk in Uganda, I felt less venerable, and more vulnerable. On June 17, 2011, I experienced a terrible and unexpected attempt on my life. After meditation, I went outside and conversed with our security guard. The Temple employed him to protect the facility and its dwellers from violence due to political instability in Uganda. He advised me about moving the solar security light to a part of the Temple grounds that was not completely fenced off. He had a point, but I did not think this was a good idea at the time. I declined to move it. While returning to the Temple the security guard followed me closely. Shortly, I heard fast moving footsteps and through my peripheral vision, saw the security guard run from one side of the temple to the other side, closer to me. I turned to see what he was doing when he ran towards me shouting, "But you man!" He then pointed his assault rifle in my face. I turned to run inside the Temple, and everything went blank.[16]

[14] Digha Nikāya : Sutta 31. Translated by Maurice Walshe.

[15] Majjhima Nikāya: 10. Translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi.

[16] Attempted Murder of a Buddhist Monk. *Tales and Trial of Planting Dhamma Seeds in Africa*. By Ven. Bhikkhu Buddharakkhita.



Figure 1. The bullet hit the glass of the main entrance door.



Figure 2 . The bullet hit the metallic window and lodged into the wall.

A phantasmagoria of horror and mystery followed. Panic, confusion, and trepidation – I felt all these emotions at once. Then the security guard fired a single shot. I did not see the gun go off, but I heard the shot. It struck the Temple doors just before I went through them and sent glass flying all over the place.

I had no time to close the doors behind me. As soon as I was inside and out of the security guard's view, I stood behind the wall for a moment. I needed to put more distance between us, and to find a safer hiding place from him. I was fleeing for my dear life. I had no time to think, and was merely acting on instinct. I made a dash for my room, all the while thinking a bullet had hit me. There was no time to focus on that, while escaping through the Temple dining area and closing the door behind me.

I made it to my room and decided to hide in the ceiling. The opening in the bathroom ceiling was very tiny and presented a nearly impossible angle, making it difficult to hoist myself up. I desperately believed that I needed to get up there if I was to live through this night. I stepped onto the toilet seat and onto the shower curtain rail, which dislodged from the wall, while gravity hurled me to the hard tiled ground. My sash came off and my phone fell to the ground. I had to find a way to get into the ceiling. This seemed like a safe place to hide. I was sweaty with saliva drooling on me and the phone, which I'd held in my mouth while attempting to climb into the ceiling. Everything was dark and dusty, the air was thick, but that was the least of my problems. I called my driver, telling him briefly what had happened and to quickly alert the police. After the phone call, I silently waited to hear sounds of a rescue …of help …of hope.

The security guard is now in police custody.

I have forgiven him.

Solutions to Problems of Teaching Buddhism in Uganda: More Dharma, Less Drama

Establishing Dhamma educational programs in areas where Dhamma seeds are not yet planted will propagate Buddhism. We must train lay people to be Dhamma teachers who will take on the role of teaching Buddhism to those who are interested in the Dhamma. In case the lay people are interested in becoming monastics, there should be programs to ordain them as novices, monks and nuns. We need more friends (local and international) to support the spreading of Dhamma in Africa by building Dhamma schools in Uganda and other parts of Africa that teach non-violence, mindfulness, ethics and social values.

I would like to see the Ugandan government establish a police station in the village of Bulega near our Temple in order to ensure that the surrounding area is secure. We need to establish another Temple in the capital city of Kampala where we can reach more people and where it is easier to get help from the police. I am sure if our temple were located in Kampala, it would take roughly five minutes for the police to arrive at the scene as opposed to the 45 minutes it took for police to rescue me the day of the shooting.

Conclusion

Buddhism is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. Dhamma is taught, not through conversion, but by convincing others through what is revealed in our own lives. To accomplish this we must “walk our talk,” and teach by example and precept. Local people who belong to other religious organizations are often skeptical. They will take time to observe the Dhamma teacher’s character. There is an old saying that, “seeing is believing.” We need to offer teachings that are relevant to the peoples’ daily lives and then they may listen to us and finally take the Buddha’s teaching to heart. It is very necessary to focus on universal teachings such as faith, generosity, ethical conduct, loving kindness, compassion, suffering, and overcoming suffering. We should cooperate and not compete with existing religions. It is essential to empower young people as future leaders through Dhamma education. When the youth get involved, they will bring their parents and the Sangha will continue increasing.

We invite you to offer suggestions and donations for spreading Buddhism in Africa.

Wishing you much Mettā

The Beatnik Buddhist: The Monk of American Pop-Culture

Blaze Marpet
Eckerd College

Part of the GAP clothing line's 1990s advertising campaign was a black and white photograph of a smiling middle-aged handsome man leaning against a city building with the subtitle, "Kerouac wore Khakis." The implication was that if the customer wore Khakis, they would be cool - just like Jack. The figure advertized, Jack Kerouac, is undoubtedly imbedded in the popular American imagination as a cool free spirit from the fifties, who did and said whatever he wanted. More importantly, he still has cultural capital, as his image sells Khakis. However, Kerouac did much more; according to some American Buddhists and scholars, he was one of the premier patriarchs of American Buddhism.[1] Because Kerouac was both a prominent figure in American popular culture and a Buddhist teacher, he created a massive platform with which he could teach and popularize his Buddhism. Often, scholars and American Buddhists acknowledge the works of Kerouac, but fail to examine his Buddhist texts. In order to understand the spread of Buddhism in the twentieth century, it is essential to understand Jack Kerouac's Buddhist teachings. This is shown through an analysis of Kerouac's Buddhist works and current scholarship, his role as a Buddhist teacher, and the religious inclusivity and non-sectarianism in his Buddhist teachings.

Kerouac's Buddhist Works and Current Scholarship

Although Asian immigrants and colonialists practiced Buddhism as early as the mid-nineteenth century, Kerouac was the first to successfully portray non-Asian Buddhist practitioners to a mainstream American audience. Initially, as a close friend of Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg, Kerouac taught Buddhist practice and philosophy within the Beat Generation. This influence later penetrated into the center of American society and scholarship; for example, Jackie Kennedy was photographed in 1961 reading his *The Dharma Bums* next to the President,[2] and the well-known Tibetan Buddhist scholar Robert Thurman encountered Buddhism through Kerouac's work in 1958, when he was only seventeen years old. Reflecting on it nearly fifty years later, Thurman called Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*: "the most accurate, poetic, and expansive evocation of the heart of Buddhism that was available at that time."[3]

Although Kerouac's influence was so expansive, there exists very little scholarship on it. Most works on the development of American Buddhism give Kerouac only passing mention.[4] These

[1] Helen Tworkon, the former editor of the prominent America Buddhist magazine *Tricycle: the Buddhist Review* once called Kerouac "the first American patriarch of American Buddhism." Rehn Kovacic "'Buddha's me': Jack Kerouac and the Creation of an American Buddhism" (masters thesis, Arizona State University, 2004), 81. Robert Thurman, in the introduction to *Wake Up: a Life of the Buddha*, wrote, "Working on this introduction, it has become apparent to me that Jack Kerouac was the lead Bodhisattva, way back there in the 1950s, among all of our very American Predecessors." Robert Thurman, introduction to *Wake Up: a Life of the Buddha*, Jack Kerouac (New York: Viking Press, 2008), vii.

[2] Kovacic, "'Buddha's Me'," 2.

[3] Thurman, introduction to *Wake Up*, vii.

[4] See Rick Fields, "Divided Dharma: White Buddhists, Ethnic Buddhists, and Racism," in *The Faces of Buddhism in*

works demonstrate that in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, Buddhist practice and discourse was limited to missionary and intellectual circles. In this time, Asian Missionaries such as Shaku Soen, D. T. Suzuki, and Anagarika Dharmapala and American missionaries like Dwight Goddard had all attempted to introduce Americans to Buddhism. Meanwhile, intellectuals such as Paul Carus, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau incorporated Eastern philosophical concepts (including Buddhist ones) into their philosophy. Most research on Kerouac acknowledges that he related the Buddhism of these missionary and intellectual circles to the mainstream American populace. In other words, the portrait most research paints is that Kerouac was a link between the rather limited intellectual Buddhism of the early nineteenth-century and the popular Buddhism of the 1960s.

While this portrait is not entirely inaccurate, it oversimplifies a crucial figure in the development of American Buddhism. Kerouac did not merely disseminate early American Buddhist philosophy and praxis to later American Buddhists, but he also transformed them, made them his own. He created his own understanding of Buddhism, and *that* was the Buddhism he taught. Therefore, understanding American Buddhism requires more than understanding that Kerouac transmitted and popularized the ideas from earlier generations to later ones; it also requires an analysis of how Kerouac shaped and transformed those ideas. Furthermore, most of the research that focuses on Kerouac is either biographical or examines his aptitude as a literary figure, analyzing his popular literature, his fiction and poetry.[5] However, Kerouac wrote much of his work as Buddhist teachings, and consequently, most research leaves the analysis of Kerouac's methods as a Buddhist teacher unattended.

Kerouac immersed himself in Buddhist practice from the fall of 1953 to 1956, composing many texts during this time. Kerouac's most comprehensive Buddhist text, *Some of the Dharma* (*Dharma*), began as Buddhist teachings for his friend Allen Ginsberg in December of 1953, but it transformed into an agglomeration of poems, notes, and teachings for the general populace by the time he finished it in March of 1956. While working on it, Kerouac came to see the book as sacred and his most important work. In November of 1954, he wrote to Ginsberg "I keep reading it [*Dharma*] myself, have but one copy, valuable, sacred to me…"[6] In 1955, Kerouac began working on a biography of the Buddha, *Wake Up: a Life of the Buddha* (whose title underwent several changes). At the prompting of his friend Garry Snyder in the spring on 1956, Kerouac wrote *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity* (*Scripture*), a Buddhist *scripture* (Sanskrit: *sūtra*) of sixty-six numbered prose paragraphs.[7] This text emphasized the importance of emptiness and the direct experience of awakening, culminating in an ecstatic meditative experience. In paragraph sixty-four Kerouac recounts how he saw the golden eternity. Then, in a koan-like fashion, in paragraph sixty-five, he says that his experience was the first teaching from the golden eternity, followed by paragraph sixty-six, wherein he says that the second teaching is that there was no first.[8] To Kerouac's dismay, although

America, ed. Charles Prebish and Kenneth Tanaka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 196-252, Robert E. Goss, "Buddhist Studies at Naropa: Sectarian or Academic," in *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, ed. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Christopher S. Queen (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), 215-238, and Richard Hughes Seager, *Buddhism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 34-42.

5 See, Timothy D. Ray, "Syncretic Visions of the Buddha: Melding and Convergence in the Work of Kerouac and Ginsberg," *College Literature* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 187-195, accessed December 4, 2010, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/lit/summary/v037/37.2.ray.html.

6 David Stanford, "About the Manuscript," in *Some of the Dharma*, by Jack Kerouac (New York: Viking Press, 1997).

7 Ann Charters, *Kerouac: a Biography (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973),* 258.

8 Jack Kerouac, *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1994) 59-61.

he regarded these three works as his most important and tried adamantly to get them published for a period of time, he only lived to see *Scripture* published. Nevertheless, these three texts constitute the entirety of Kerouac's work written as Buddhist teachings, and when he was immersed in Buddhism, he considered them more important than all the rest. These books—especially *Dharma*, since it is a journal (amongst other things)—provide the most honest and explicit account of what Kerouac actually thought about Buddhism. The ideas and practices contained within these texts explain the underlying thought that he popularized through his other work, as well as his ideas about how to popularize that thought.

However, *The Dharma Bums*, published in 1958, his second most popular work after *On The Road*, published in 1957, played the biggest role in propagating Kerouac's Buddhism. The book offered a fictional account of Kerouac (Ray Smith), Snyder (Japhy Ryder), and Ginsberg's (Alvah Goldbook's) adventures and experiences with Buddhism. The book provided the youth of the 1950's with a romanticized account of Buddhism, promulgating a generation of "dharma bums" who would engage in a "rucksack revolution" led by "Zen lunatics." In addition to the Dharma Bums, Kerouac wrote several other literary works—mostly poems and novels—imbued with his Buddhist ideas.[9]

At first glance, Kerouac's Buddhist writings appear Americanized and Christianized, on the grounds that they are in English and use Christian metaphors. For example, the opening page of *Some of the Dharma* includes three biblical passages and references.[10] On page nine, Kerouac likens the Buddha to Jesus, writing, "BUDDHA AND JESUS BOTH FREED THEMSELVES OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS DREAM FLOOD…"[11] However, the fact that Kerouac uses English is not sufficient to charge him with specifically Americanizing Buddhism, because Buddhism has always been translated into local languages. Similarly, the use of Christian concepts is not enough to charge Kerouac of specifically Christianizing Buddhism, in that Buddhism has always incorporated local religious figures into its pantheon. Understanding the dynamics at work in Kerouac's Buddhist teachings requires an analysis of two things: first, the context in which they were written, and second a more specific look at how they blend with Christianity.

Kerouac as a Buddhist Teacher

Because Kerouac composed his Buddhist writings a teacher, they must be understood in a pedagogical context. It follows from being a teacher that one be an authoritative voice, yet Kerouac had no formal or primary teacher himself. His knowledge of Buddhism consisted mostly of reading secondary texts by other American and European Buddhists of his time, reading translated Buddhist *sūtras*, and conversing with other men of (more often than not) about equal knowledge.

Kerouac first discovered Buddhism when he found a reference to Hindu Philosophy while studying Thoreau. Pursuing this reference, he stumbled upon Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita.[12] Shortly after, he found Dwight Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible*, whose modified Surangama Sutra, Lankavatara Sutra, and Diamond Sutra constituted a central importance to him. Kerouac makes his sources

9 Such as *Tristessa* (1960), *Visions of Gerard* (1963), *Satori in Paris* (1966), and others.

10 Jack Kerouac, *Some of the Dharma* (New York: Viking, 1997), 3.

11 Ibid., 9.

12 Tom Clark, *Jack Kerouac: a Biography* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 131.

explicit eight pages into *Dharma*, where he includes a bibliography, containing Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible*, Paul Carus's *The Gospel of the Buddha*, and Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita along with several other works.[13] Amongst his contemporaries, Kerouac probably learned the most from Gary Snyder, and it is likely that Kerouac, intimidated by Snyder's acumen in Buddhist discourse, did very little teaching and most of the listening. In short, Kerouac learned Buddhism from the few sources available to someone who did not know an Asian language or travel to Asia; he read available Buddhist texts, and conversed with those who had more access to Buddhist traditions.

From the time Kerouac discovered Buddhism, he sought to share it with others. Almost immediately after his discovery, he tried passionately to convert his friends Neal and Carolyn Cassady, who were adamant followers of Edgar Cayce, a California mystic of their time.[14] At the same time, Kerouac was quick in his attempt to persuade his other Beatnik friends, his family, and even acquaintances in the writing world. In teaching Buddhism, Kerouac came to identify with other prominent teachers in American culture. For example, in a 1954 letter to Ginsberg, Kerouac tells Ginsberg that since he is Ginsberg's Buddhist guide, Ginsberg ought to listen to him as if he were Einstein teaching relativity.[15] Kerouac would also place himself within the same context as the most prolific Buddhist teachers of his day. In 1955, Kerouac wrote to Ginsberg, "I dug Suzuki in NY public library, and I guarantee you I can do everything he does and better, in intrinsic Dharma teaching by words."[16]

It follows from being a teacher that the texts have an authoritative voice. But Kerouac, in being so new to Buddhism and at the same time being an expert, greatly condensed the complexity of Buddhism, making it easier to practice. Since Kerouac was new to Buddhism and a teacher, in his thought, the teacher and the student quite literally became one. Kerouac and his friends, from the time they started practicing Buddhism, always thought of themselves as very far along the religious path it provided. In fact, the very night that Kerouac discovered Buddhism, he went home to meditate and decided that he achieved enlightenment.[17] Kerouac also referred to himself, his friends, and his acquaintances as "Bodhisattvas" throughout *The Dharma Bums*. Eventually, as Rehn Kovacic points out, Kerouac came to indentify himself with the historical Buddha, and *Wake Up* is, in fact, Kerouac's conflation of their two lives.[18] In this way, Kerouac understood Buddhism not as it had commonly been construed (especially in non-Vajrayana traditions) as a long process of spiritual development, but rather, as something that someone could grasp and teach with relative speed and ease.

Regardless, Kerouac looked for textual support for his view. In *Some of the Dharma* he writes, "'It is said in the AVATAMSAKA SUTRA that as soon as novice Bodhisattvas begin their practice of Dhyana Meditation that they have already accomplished their full Enlightenment…'"[19] In additional support of this view, Kerouac often referred to Chinese Toa masters and those who he dubbed "Zen lunatics," the most prominent among these being Han Shan, whose work Snyder—as Japhy Ryder—translated in *The Dharma Bums*. The image Kerouac paints of these figures is that they transcended the rigidity of the monastic order through leaving it. These figures immediately

13 Kerouac, *Some of the Dharma*, 8.

14 Charters, *Kerouac*, 200-201.

15 Carole Tonkinson, "Jack Kerouac," in *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation*, ed. Carole Tonkinson (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995), 41.

16 David Stanford, "About the Manuscript."

17 Clark, *Jack Kerouac*, 131.

18 Kovacic, "'Buddha's Me'," 146-187.

19 Kerouac, *Some of the Dharma*, 396.

become master on their own. Simply put, Kerouac, in becoming a teacher, drastically compressed the continuum of Buddhist practice from novice to master that has existed in most places at most times.

Religious Inclusivity and Non-Sectarianism in Kerouac's Buddhism

Kerouac's Buddhist teachings, along with his other poems and semi-autobiographical writings, specifically *The Dharma Bums*, contain explicit references to Christianity. Kerouac was born and died a Catholic, but scholars debate the actual way in which Catholicism and Buddhism converged in Kerouac's life and thought. Thus, the task at hand is deciphering exactly how the two converged.

Many influential biographers argue that Kerouac's interest in Buddhism was minimal. In one of the earliest and most definitive Biographies on Kerouac, Ann Charters writes, "Kerouac was born a Catholic, raised a Catholic and died a Catholic. His interest in Buddhism was a discovery of different religious images for his fundamentally constant religious feelings."[20] Thirty years later, greatly influenced by Charters, the scholar Matt Theado wrote, "Kerouac augmented rather than replaced his childhood religious beliefs."[21] In this analysis, scholars argue that Buddhism was merely a literary device for conveying Kerouac's fundamental Catholic beliefs. In other words, these scholars argue that Buddhism took a subsequent, instrumental and expressive role in Kerouac's life and writing, always subordinate to Catholicism.

Such analysis, however, inevitably ignores some of Kerouac's writing, specifically his diaries and letters, and the fact that for a period of time, Kerouac identified himself as a Buddhist.[22] Kerouac, in *Some of the Dharma*, not only repeatedly proclaims to be a Buddhist, but also critiques Catholicism. For example, one section of the book is "A Refutation of Catholic Dualism."[23] In this passage, Kerouac starts with a strictly philosophical criticism. After quoting a passage from Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, in which Aquinas writes of the goodness of fire, Kerouac responds, "The assumption that the fire is good is based on a previous assumption arguing that To Be, or Being, is good. But Being is neither good nor bad, it's just a dream." Kerouac then extends this criticism from philosophical grounds to cultural. He writes, "Catholic Dualism is behind the error of Western Civilization with its war of machines…" In short, Kerouac's formulated his refutation of Christianity through criticizing its philosophy and its cultural ramifications, two things in which he clearly thought Buddhism prevailed.

In the sense that Kerouac both identified as a Buddhist personally and refuted Catholicism, there is no way that he could have remained Catholic throughout his life, as some biographers suggest. Such analysis downplays the degree that Buddhism shaped Kerouac's thought and his intermittent apostasy. Therefore, Kovacic attributes more power to Buddhism's influence on Kerouac. He writes, "Religion is a framework of meaning that orients adherents in the world. Kerouac's acceptance of Buddhism, contrary to these scholars' interpretation, changed the way that Kerouac saw the world around him."[24]

[20] Ann Charters, *Kerouac*, 199.
[21] Matt Theado, *Understanding Jack Kerouac* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 123.
[22] Kovacic, "'Buddha's Me'," 66.
[23] Kerouac, *Some of the Dharma*, 66.
[24] Kovacic, "'Buddha's Me'," 65.

The claims that Kerouac was born and died a Catholic and the claim that he embraced Buddhism at some point of his life are not contradictory, in that he adhered to each at a different point of time. However, it is exceedingly difficult to decipher when he was Christian and used Buddhist terms from when he was Buddhist and used Christian terms. Kerouac made it clear in *Some of the Dharma* that when he wrote as a Buddhist teacher he merely used Christian metaphors to convey Buddhist concepts as *skillful means* (Sanskrit: *upāya*).[25] In this way, the explicit references and parallels to Christian ideas when explaining Buddhism may not reflect Kerouac's own understanding. Rather, Kerouac may be using Christian ideas to explain Buddhist concepts merely because he thinks they might better convey the idea to the student. Thus, it is hard to know when Kerouac actually believed the two religions to be the same, or when he just used the similarities as a pedagogical tool. Nevertheless, Kerouac's use of Christian terms invariably shows his awareness for his own and his audience's religious needs. Although the specific details of when and how Christianity shaped Kerouac's Buddhism are difficult to answer, the simple fact that both religions existed in light of each other reveals certain things about Kerouac's Buddhism. His Buddhism always existed in relation to other religious traditions, like his Catholicism or his friend Allen Ginsberg's Judaism. Thus, as a teacher, Kerouac was forced to assert Buddhism as either superior to, or at least coterminous with, other religions. In doing this, Kerouac always focused on the more "logical" and deemphasized the "mythical" aspects of Buddhism.[26] This influence undoubtedly came from sources like Goddard's *A Buddhist Bible*, Paul Carus's *The Gospel of the Buddha*, which Kerouac often referenced explicitly.

Kovacic delineates Kerouac's main Buddhist concepts as, "compassion, the illusion of reality, arbitrary conceptions, no-self, emptiness, and universal mind."[27] All of these, no doubt are either ethical, like compassion, or philosophical, like emptiness. Emphasizing Buddhism in such a way leaves out other integral parts of the religion, such as rituals or rebirth, which tends to be seen as "mythic." In this way, Kerouac reduces or compartmentalizes Buddhism into something ethical and philosophical but not cultural or mythical, which in turn, allows it to compete with other religions in its universality. In saying that the heart of Buddhism is compassion, Buddhism remains consistent with Catholicism and Judaism.

Kerouac not only found Buddhism consistent with other religions, he found each school of Buddhism consistent with others. Contemporary scholars generally attempt to categorize Kerouac's Buddhism into one doctrinal school with a referent in Asia. For example, Donald Lopez, in *A Modern Buddhist Bible*, refers to Kerouac as mostly interested in Zen Buddhism, influenced by Gary Snyder, though he acknowledges Kerouac's mentions of Tibetan Buddhism as well.[28] However, Kerouac often clearly objected to Zen Buddhism. In *The Dharma Bums,* he, as Ray Smith, explained to Snyder, as Japhy Ryder, "It's *mean*… All those Zen masters throwing young kids in the mud because they can't answer their silly word questions."[29] In the introduction to *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation*, Stephen Prothero, proposes that instead of Zen, Kerouac was drawn to "a diffuse Mahayana Buddhism."[30] However, even this broad understanding is too specific. At another

25 Ibid., 72.

26 The words "mythical" and "logical" are written in quotations not because they are Kerouac's own words, but because scholars commonly use them referring to American Buddhism.

27 Kovacic, "'Buddha's Me'," 110.

28 Donald Lopez, "Jack Kerouac," in *A Modern Buddhist Bible: Essential Readings from East and West*, ed. Donald Lopez (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 172-181.

29 Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 9.

30 Stehpen Prothero, introduction to *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation*, ed. Carole Tonkinson (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995), 17

point in *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac writes that he is an "an old fashioned dreamy [Theravadan] coward of later Mahayanism."[31] Later in the same book, he claims to engage in Tibetan Buddhist practice.[32] So, in one book alone, Kerouac identifies with what he terms [Theravada], Mahayana, and Vajrayana, and at the same time objects to one specific Mahayana school, Zen.

In this sense, it seems that Scholars inevitably fail in trying to fit Kerouac into one doctrinal or sectarian school of Buddhism, in that Kerouac consciously tried to transcend these boundaries. He called his non-sectarian Buddhism "Pure Essence Buddhism," writing, "Pure Essence Buddhism is what I think I want, and lay aside all the arbitrary rest of it, [Theravada], Shuinayana, etc., Mahayana, Zen, Shmen."[33] Clearly, just as Kerouac thought that Buddhism transcended all of its mythical elements, he thought that Buddhism transcended cultural or institutional boundaries. He exemplified this thought, writing that he "didn't give a goddamn about the mythology and all the names and national flavors of Buddhism."[34]

Conclusion

Viewing Buddhism as transcendent of cultural and sectarian manifestations, like Kerouac's "Pure Essence Buddhism" is a common theme in American Buddhism.[35] Donald Lopez notes that many Buddhists, American and non-American alike, think that historically, various cultural influences distorted the original teachings of the Buddha.[36] He also notes that there is a doctrinal justification to this view, the doctrine of the "decline of the Dharma," which states that from the time of the historical Buddha, the Dharma will be degraded.[37] However, American Buddhism differs in that it has, as Lopez puts it, "the conviction that centuries of cultural and clerical ossification could be stripped from the teachings of the Buddha to reveal a Buddhism that was neither Sinhalese, Japanese, Chinese, or Thai."[38] In other words, American Buddhism and more traditional forms of Buddhism agree that the Dharma gets culturally and historically degraded, but American Buddhism, such as Kerouac's, differs in that it thinks it can overcome this degradation and recover the actual teaching of the Buddha.

Kerouac's reduction of Buddhism from the cultural to either the ethical or philosophical is one instance of general American Buddhist trend in which Buddhism is reduced into only one of its aspects. American Buddhists have collapsed the essence of Buddhism into an "experience," a "spirituality" or even in some cases, a "science." Each of these reductions makes Buddhism more compatible with other facets of American life through ignoring the parts of each that do not coincide. Thus, the coexistence of Buddhism and other religions, as Kerouac demonstrates, invariably leads to restricted definitions of both religions.

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[31] Kovacic, "'Buddha's Me'," page 134
[32] Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 20.
[33] David Stanford, "About the Manuscript."
[34] Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 8.
[35] Kovacic, "Buddha's Me, 109."
[36] Donald Lopez, introduction to *A Modern Buddhist Bible: Essential Readings from East and West*, ed. Donald Lopez (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), xxxv.
[37] Ibid., xxxvi.
[38] Ibid., xxxvii.

Jack Kerouac, in being both a novice and a teacher, represents one general trend in American Buddhism. A large number of American Buddhist authoritative figures, are only minimally accomplished by the standards of the traditions from which they come. For example, Lopez explains that with D.T. Suzuki, a teacher who informed and conversed with Kerouac and his friends, "a relatively marginal Zen teacher in Japan [Suzuki] established what would become mainstream Zen practice in America."[39] In this way, Kerouac as a teacher is reflective of a trend for teachers of American Buddhism.

Kerouac shaped his understanding of Buddhism as a teacher through reformulating the difference between novice and master. He shaped his Buddhism in light of other competing religions through restricting his definition of Buddhism and emphasizing aspects he found important. And finally, Kerouac shaped his understanding of Buddhism as non-sectarian, transcending the referents of culturally lived Buddhism across the globe. Moreover, Kerouac's interpretations of Buddhism are constantly cogent with other American Buddhist ideals, such as religious inclusivity, the disregard of sectarian boundaries, and the demythologization of Buddhist ideas. Many American Buddhist teachers are new to Buddhism, condense Buddhism into the "essentials," and think that these essentials transcend the differences between historically distinct Buddhist schools. Since Kerouac was, above all, both a teacher and an icon, understanding how Kerouac understood Buddhism helps to understand American Buddhism itself.

[39] Ibid., xxviii.

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Teaching Dharma in the United States

Ven. Dr. Chao Chu

As a Buddhist monk who has traveled through the United States in conducting meditation retreats, giving lectures, and participating in discussions on meditation and other Buddhist topics, I see how such ideas are used every day and how they have brought many people closer to Buddhism.

Many Westerners have become disillusioned with the religions that they were brought up with and seek to find something that is less dogmatic and more encompassing. People have come closer to Buddhism because of their dissatisfaction of religious fundamentalists and their conservative, must-follow-without-questions attitude. Religious thoughts that have been built with fear cannot force people to stay with spiritual practice.

Buddhism has been accepted in non-Buddhist communities because of its applicability to general concerns. People who have come to know more about Buddhism feel that the Buddhist teachings provide another choice for spiritual needs and how it can help in their daily lives.

Many Americans focus on techniques that help them to find stillness and focus rather than esoteric, theology-like teachings. Buddhist values are also found in social movements – ecology, animal rights, peace, simplicity, harmony, and the natural environment.

Values are also important in smaller ways. Thanksgiving is a national holiday in the United States. Sometimes students are required to write about what they think about Thanksgiving. Some high school students came to our temple to ask what Buddhists think about the tradition and what Buddhists do during Thanksgiving.

I explained that parents, teachers, and everybody around us help our life daily. We thank them for their hard work and think about how it has improved everyone's lives. Some of those students returned to inform me that they received high marks in their papers and reports.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are also celebrated here. Many Buddhist temples and centers do various activities, such as exchanging gifts and eating together. Lectures are given to explain the importance of valuing their relationships and paying respects.

American-born Asians also celebrate these holidays while inviting their relatives and friends to participate. These gatherings are not just get-togethers or parties because during these gatherings, they may come to know more about Asian and Buddhist culture. The gatherings are also opportunities to exchange cultural values as well as religious ideas that are also a part of the culture.

A few months ago, I conducted a wedding ceremony for an American medical doctor who became a Buddhist four years ago. None of his or the prospective bride's relatives and friends who came to the wedding was Buddhist. Some of them were a little suspicious before the wedding ceremony had begun. They did not know what would happen in a wedding ceremony that would involve a Buddhist monk.

The day before the wedding, I sat with their parents and some of the other family members. We talked about traveling, food, and, of course, religious and cultural differences. There I had an opportunity to explain more about Buddhism because they continually asked more about what they had seen or heard about Buddhism. Some of them had read books and articles on Buddhism but never had a chance to talk about it.

Everybody felt very comfortable after the discussion because we had at home. After the wedding, they did not have any fear or suspicion. We became so friendly and some of them asked openly, "How can I become a Buddhist?"

People have left their beliefs and have come closer to Buddhism because of their dissatisfaction of religious fundamentalists and their conservative, must-follow-without-questions attitude. Religious thoughts that have been built with fear cannot force people to stay with spiritual practice.

American Buddhism is emerging in Buddhist centers such as Shasta Abbey, Los Angeles Buddhist Union, and the International Buddhist Meditation Center. Ordained Sangha and ministers are doing their duties as Dharma teachers. These American-born teachers re-frame ancient Buddhist principles in contemporary Western terms. Their approach of non-missionary explanation and practice fits well with Americans who are search for a spiritual path that can explain simply the causes and effects of our activities, being responsible for our actions, and believe in consequences not because of fear but because they make sense.

Buddhist chaplains have brought Buddhism to prisons to teach self-control, social skills, and contemplative practice that have been supplemented by yoga, prayer, and study to benefit inmates and workers. For example, Buddhist practices such as meditation have reached the highest-security prison in Alabama where one-third of prisoners are imprisoned for life.

Every quarter, prisoners who have been chosen from a waiting list join the 10-day program to focus on meditating for 10 hours a day. Silence is a key characteristic; the first three days involve focusing on breathing techniques. Each day begins at 4 a.m. and ends at 9 p.m. The prisoners do not smoke, drink alcohol or drinks that have caffeine nor do they consume meat. Some prisoners have said that meditation and discussions have helped them find peace. Positive results have convinced the warden to continue the program.

One of our trained Sangha members visits prisons regularly to conduct chanting, meditation, and reading sessions. He was a police officer before he ordained as a Buddhist. Another Sangha member is regularly called by police departments in the Los Angeles area to conduct meetings and discussions. These are even more opportunities to introduce Buddhist teachings to non-Buddhist groups in various environments.

The Air Quality Management District is an organization that regulates the quality of air in much of Southern California. Earlier this year, I attend an award ceremony to perform an invocation to bless their work and cooperate with other religious leaders to inform the community of our perspectives on environmental-related issues. I have attended many such events for the past 30 years in the Los Angeles area, such as supervisors' meetings, city council meetings, and school graduations to perform similar duties.

In 1984, I was fortunate enough to serve on the Olympic Committee in Los Angeles as a Buddhist chaplain. Some athletes, trainers, and other staff members came to me before and after competitions to talk about their frustrations that came with the events, especially when some of them lost.

The media and findings of Western science have also spread awareness of the benefits of meditation and Buddhist teaching. Numerous articles on famous magazines such as *Time* and *Life*, programs on television channels such as *PBS, CNN,* and *BBC,* and ever-growing popularity of the Internet have brought this knowledge to the public and documented its contribution in developing further ideas.

In 1993, Tricycle, a Buddhist magazine, started “Change Your Mind Day” to welcome anyone to mediate without the formality of Buddhism. Several hundred people attended the first gathering, and the idea has been spread to many cities that are in the United States.

The outdoor event has invited teachers from different Buddhist traditions and continues to be held annually nearly two decades later; some locations have attendance in the thousands. Many people who attended came with their family members, co-workers, or friends. They were not afraid of going to the event because the participants did not focus on their personal beliefs, religious affiliations, conversion, etc. They were people who saw Buddhism as one. Our temple has also organized Change Your Mind Day events at public parks and cemeteries.

Once, a cancer patient was at a hospital. Her family members were looking for a Buddhist monk to come. When they called me, I went to the hospital to find that the patient was reading Buddhist scripture. I was told that she would also sometimes visit Buddhist centers even though her family was Jewish. We discussed Buddhism and some of her family members became interested in learning as they asked more about Buddhist teachings.

Buddhist monks whom I have known have also joined the effort to help others and go not only to prisons but also to juvenile detention centers to reach a varied audience. They de-emphasize many common practices of traditional rituals, chanting, devotional activities, merit-making, and doctrinal studies. Teachers do not emphasize particular doctrines, sectarian identification, lineage, etc. They do not try to convert people to Buddhism. Regardless of religious affiliation, they just offer teachings that minimize stress and think positively.

Many lay teachers and small groups meet all over the United States as a part of the Vipassana movement, which does not have much of a connection to Theravada or Mahayana Buddhist temples or centers. Practice classes and retreats are offered not only at temples, but also in hospitals, clinics, prisons, yoga centers, private homes, and in churches. In these classes or places, people do not talk about Buddhist philosophy in detail. Teachers or students call their practicing methods “stress reduction”, “pain management”, “body-scanning”, “self-awareness development”, etc. The popularity of mental development has spread from books to discs to the Internet.

Teachers present Buddhism as a meditation-centered teaching or a spiritual tradition more than Theravada or Mahayana Buddhist traditional / ritual / scholarly religion. The focus is on understanding of everyday challenges and freedom of one’s current life rather than on one’s next life. The main themes in practice are mindfulness, loving-kindness, ethics, and generosity.

Zen centers have had more success in a residential environment. Zen does not have as many rituals but has its own characteristics, such as koans (sayings) and tea ceremonies. That kind of environment has also brought many people more closely to Buddhism.

Buddhism is also being discovered at a variety of levels without it being labeled as Buddhism. There are those with other or no religious affiliations who use Buddhist concepts and practices more than typical Buddhists. For example, there are class discussions, study groups, and book clubs that meet at my temple and various homes from people of different backgrounds who share their experiences and opinions; some do not even claim to be Buddhist. They include nurses, juvenile detention officers, elder caretakers, social workers, teachers, government workers, musicians, and others as they talk about their personal problems and how Buddhist teachings have helped them in their professional and private lives.

Some class participants say that they are able to move forward with many difficulties or situations without developing negative thinking. At the moment of annoyance that is present by training our mind to view the world as good and positive thinking of Buddhists, teaching makes a big difference to their daily lives. These different lifestyles are reminders of how Buddhism has been incorporated in busy American culture while not necessarily including the cultural and religious practices and beliefs of the immigrants who brought them.

These spiritual seekers need a meaningful explanation. Our trained Sangha and ministers fit with it. They can explain the meaning and value of life and offer spiritual practices that Western religions have not emphasized. They also offer experimental "do-it-yourself" practices to suit the freedom of self-effort to solve suffering or discomfort in different ways. They do not introduce just a new belief system or a new set of rules in the name of the Creator of the Universe. Rather than depending on an outside source of help, its emphasis on self-description and inward looking attracts educated people.

Some of them have said that the less-doctrinal and ritualistic approach has made them interested in being socially and ecologically engaged. They prefer to see the religious or spiritual practice as a way of enhancing the quality of their thoughts and actions. We do not ask people to spend much time at religious places; they are advised instead to practice wherever they are. One can practice patience while waiting in line at a bank, post office, clinic, etc. Willingness to listen and commitment to practice is encouraged.

The attitude of Buddhism to "come and see for yourself" has attracted many Westerners to explore its teachings. The informality and freedom of practice attracts people who are looking for a religion of spiritual practice. For non-religious people, there is the appeal of the emphasis on understanding and practice rather than rituals and praying. Whether Westerners are religious or not, they are attracted to Buddhism because of the teachings of mindfulness, responsibility, interdependence, the reality of cause and effect, and its care for all living beings.

Buddhist Practice: Within an Environment of Concrete and Steel

Rev. John M. Scorsine[1]

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof….
>
> U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment

Introduction[2]

Isolation, desolation, depravity, stifling, oppressive, demoralizing, dehumanizing, and barren; these terms describe one's first impressions as you walk through the sully port and enter the environment of an American correctional facility. And, yet, in this alien world, despite all its regimentation, physical and emotional cruelty there is the Buddhadharma. Buddhism may not be the most popular religion in American prisons, but its presence is apparent and its practice is protected by federal and state laws. However, that is not to say that obstacles to practice are absent.

Prisoners, contrary to popular myth, do not shed their rights afforded by the U.S. Constitution as they walk behind the cement and steel of a correctional institution. Religious freedom is a touchstone of American society and, in fact, it was through religion that the American concept of penology was first established; which only creates the irony which is religious practice in American penal institutions.

It is ironic that in recent times the incarcerated have had to go to court to seek the ability to freely exercise their religious practice within the walls of institutions first established with religious underpinnings. It was the Quakers, more than two Centuries ago, that began the reformation of American penology with the establishment of penitentiaries as the innovation of the late 18th and early 19th Century. Meant to be places of solitude and reflection, it was thought that reformation of an offender merely required enforced silence, prayer and dedicated study of the Bible and Christian teachings.

This brief paper will explore the current legal environment in which U.S. prisoners are afforded the right to practice their religion while incarcerated. After exploring the legal basis of religious freedom for offenders, societal and institutional constraints on those practices will be

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[2] The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Colorado Department of Corrections, the State of Colorado, the U.S. Government, or any other organization.

discussed. Finally, the author will offer some anecdotes from his service as a faith group volunteer and now as a volunteer chaplain within the Colorado State prison system.

Legal Right to Practice Religion

Despite its underpinnings within the religious community, American corrections has a checkered history when it comes to the accommodation of religion. It perhaps goes without saying, that the lion share of litigation involves minority faith traditions – few reported cases address discrimination against mainstream Christian traditions. To understand the religious rights of prisoners within the United States one has to begin with a brief synopsis of the law.[3]

Within the United States Constitution, the Founding Fathers included a list of ten fundamental rights meant to be the touchstones of what it would mean to be a citizen of the United States. They are the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. These ten statements of individual and collective rights are known as the Bill of Rights. The most jealously guarded and sacred of these rights is embodied in the First Amendment, adopted in 1791.

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.[4]

While offenders lose certain Constitutional rights upon conviction for a serious crime, and further rights if incarcerated, they are not stripped of all rights. Federal and state laws govern the administration of prisons as well as the rights of inmates. Although prisoners do not have full Constitutional rights, they are protected by the Constitution's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment contained within the Eighth Amendment. Prisoners also retain rights under the Due Process provisions of the Constitution. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment extends is coverage to prisoners. Prisoners are protected against unequal treatment on the basis of race, sex, and creed. Offenders also have limited rights under the First Amendment to freedom of speech and religion.[5]

Though there are numerous First Amendment cases related to religious accommodation, a recent case evolved out of the social activism of the 1960's and the 1970's and provides a good starting point to survey the law. Involving a "free exercise" claim brought by a Buddhist prisoner, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the State of Texas had discriminated in the restrictions it placed upon a minority religion. [6]

In the *Cruz* case, the issue considered by the Court centered on the disparity in the ability to practice mainstream religions versus minority religions.

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[3] This essay is not meant to provide a comprehensive review of jurisprudence in the area of inmate rights and law as it relates to religion. Entire treatises address this topic. This discussion merely is meant to discuss a few watershed moments in the development of American law.

[4] U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment.

[5] See generally, Wolff v. McDonnell, 418 U.S. 539 (1974)

[6] Cruz vs. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972)

> …Cruz is a Buddhist, who is in a Texas prison. While prisoners who are members of other religious sects are allowed to use the prison chapel, Cruz is not. He shared his Buddhist religious material with other prisoners and… in retaliation was placed in solitary confinement on a diet of bread and water for two weeks, without access to newspapers, magazines, or other sources of news... was prohibited from corresponding with his religious advisor in the Buddhist sect. <further> Texas encourages inmates to participate in other religious programs, providing at state expense chaplains of the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant faiths; providing also at state expense copies of the Jewish and Christian Bibles, and conducting weekly Sunday school classes and religious services. According to the allegations, points of good merit are given prisoners as a reward for attending orthodox religious services, those points enhancing a prisoner's eligibility for desirable job assignments and early parole consideration… [7]

Lower courts had not allowed Cruz to present his suit and went on to say that security and disciplinary issues may be valid constraints on the equality of the treatment of religion.[8] The Supreme Court found that if the allegations leveled against Texas by Cruz were proven at a hearing on the merits of the Cruz complaint, then Texas would have violated the 1st and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

> If Cruz was a Buddhist and if he was denied a reasonable opportunity of pursuing his faith comparable to the opportunity afforded fellow prisoners who adhere to conventional religious precepts, then there was palpable discrimination by the State against the Buddhist religion, established in 600 B.C., long before the Christian era. The First Amendment, applicable to the States by reason of the Fourteenth Amendment, *Torcaso* v. *Watkins,* 367 U. S. 488, 492-493, prohibits government from making a law "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. If the allegations of this complaint are assumed to be true, as they must be on the motion to dismiss, Texas has violated the First and Fourteenth Amendments.[9]

The Court then went on to affirm that: "[f]ederal courts sit not to supervise prisons but to enforce the constitutional rights of all 'persons,' which include prisoners. We are not unmindful that prison officials must be accorded latitude in the administration of prison affairs, and that prisoners necessarily are subject to appropriate rules and regulations. But persons in prison, like other individuals, have the right to petition the Government for redress of grievances…"[10]

The next milestone in any discussion of bringing the Dharma into an American correctional institution would be the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act enacted by Congress in 1993 ("RFRA").[11] Section 3 of the Act provided that:

> (a) **In General**: Government shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except as provided in subsection (b).

7 Id. at 319.
8 Id at 319, citing 445 F.2d 801.
9 Id. at 322.
10 Id. at 322.
11 42 USC 2000bb, et. seq.

(b) **Exception**: Government may substantially burden a person's exercise of religion only if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person--

(1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and,

(2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.

(c) **Judicial Relief**: A person whose religious exercise has been burdened in violation of this section may assert that violation as a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding and obtain appropriate relief against a government. Standing to assert a claim or defense under this section shall be governed by the general rules of standing under article III of the Constitution.[12]

This law was enacted with the intent that the protection it afforded would apply across the spectrum of government in the United States; federal, state and local units of government. Previously, the courts had balanced the needs of the individual with the needs of the government in administering a facility. Such a balancing test was biased in favor of any governmental interest. RFRA was meant to replace the pre-existing "balancing analysis", which applied to religious regulation in prisons, with a "compelling governmental interest" and "least restrictive means" standard. The law was heralded by religious and civil rights groups as a landmark advance in prisoner rights. The correctional departments of the various states, however, did not share the enthusiasm.

Taken together, these two new standards meant that for the government to regulate religious practice in a custodial setting it had to prove that there was a compelling governmental interest for the imposition on the practice of religion. Then, the government would have to prove that it was addressing that interest in the least restrictive means reasonably possible. Strictly enforced, RFRA would require prison administrations to make substantial accommodations for religious practices.

RFRA was nearly immediately met with legal challenges from the states on the grounds that the federal government had over-reached and infringed on areas of law reserved to the states. In the *City of Boerne vs. Flores*, the Supreme Court ruled that RFRA was unconstitutional as applied to the states on 14th Amendment grounds.[13] *Flores* was not a corrections case. However, its decision had state and local correctional administrators nationwide issue a collective sigh of relief. The decision did not apply to federal facilities or facilities in the U.S. territories.[14] Federal and territorial governments remain subject to RFRA.[15]

The ruling of the Supreme Court in *Flores* became the impetus for not only state enactments of RFRA type laws, but also for the legislative creativity of Congress. Congress, determined to prohibit discrimination against individuals, houses of worship and other religious institutions on religious grounds, enacted the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000. ("RLUIPA") [16]

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[12] 42 UC 2000bb-1

[13] City of Boerne vs. Flores, 521 US 507 (1997)

[14] The United States, today, consists not only of the 50 states, but four federal territories – Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. While granted some degree of autonomy and home rule, these territories are subject to federal laws without the constraints of the 14th Amendment.

[15] Gonzales v. OCentro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal, 546 US 418 (2006)

[16] 42 USC 2000cc, et. seq.

Using its enforcement powers under the 14th Amendment, its ability to regulate interstate commerce, and its spending clause powers, Congress tailored the RLUIPA to re-impose the strict scrutiny standards of the former RFRA. To infringe upon the exercise of religion, the government, at any level, would have to show both a compelling interest for the regulation and that the regulation is the least restrictive means of achieving the compelling interest. This law has survived judicial attacks by the states.[17]

If RFRA made the security professionals within the correctional industry angry, RLUIPA left them squealing and wailing. Section 3(a) of the law prohibits regulations that impose a "substantial burden" on institutionalized persons who are exercising their religious tradition.

> SEC. 3. PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS EXERCISE OF INSTITUTIONALIZED PERSONS.
>
> (a) GENERAL RULE- No government shall impose a substantial burden on the religious exercise of a person residing in or confined to an institution, as defined in section 2 of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (42 U.S.C. 1997), even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, unless the government demonstrates that imposition of the burden on that person--
>
> (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and,
>
> (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.
>
> (b) SCOPE OF APPLICATION- This section applies in any case in which--
>
> (1) the substantial burden is imposed in a program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance; or
>
> (2) the substantial burden affects, or removal of that substantial burden would affect, commerce with foreign nations, among the several States, or with Indian tribes.

In the legislative history of the law, the comments of Senator Kennedy were directed and focused on the religious practices within correctional institutions. He noted that often times regulations prohibit inmates the ability to freely exercise their religion when such practice would not cause harm to discipline, safety, or the order of the institution. The Senator went on to discuss the strong connection between a faith, sincerely held, and rehabilitation.[18]

In a 2005 unanimous decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, the Court upheld Section 3 of RLUIPA as a constitutional exercise of Congress' legislative powers.[19] Justice Ginsburg, speaking for the Court in *Cutter v. Wilkerson*, held:

> For more than a decade, the federal Bureau of Prisons has managed the largest correctional system in the Nation under the same heightened scrutiny standard as RLUIPA without compromising prison security, public safety, or the constitutional rights of other prisoners." Brief for United States 24 (citation omitted). The Congress that enacted RLUIPA was aware of the Bureau's experience. See Joint Statement S7776 (letter from Dept. of Justice to Sen.

[17] See generally, Gower, Kelly, *Religious Practice in Prison and the Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act: Strict Scrutiny Restored*, 6 Rutgers J. Law and Religion 7 (2004).

[18] 146 CONG.REC. S6678-02 at 6688 (13 July 2000)

[19] Cutter v. Wilkerson, 544 US 709 (2005)

Hatch) ("[W]e do not believe [RLUIPA] would have an unreasonable impact on prison operations. RFRA has been in effect in the Federal prison system for six years and compliance with that statute has not been an unreasonable burden to the Federal prison system."). We see no reason to anticipate that abusive prisoner litigation will overburden the operations of state and local institutions. The procedures mandated by the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995, we note, are designed to inhibit frivolous filings.

Should inmate requests for religious accommodations become excessive, impose unjustified burdens on other institutionalized persons, or jeopardize the effective functioning of an institution, the facility would be free to resist the imposition. In that event, adjudication in as-applied challenges would be in order.[20]

Under RLUIPA the standard returned to that of RFRA and is enforceable against governments at all levels. The law is enforceable by both the Department of Justice ("DOJ") and individuals. DOJ may pursue actions for declarative judgments and injunctive relief, but not for monetary damages. These enforcement actions are pursued by the Special Litigation Section of the Civil Rights Division of DOJ. Until recently, if an individual wished to seek monetary damages for a Section 3 violation, he would bring an individual suit.

The ability of individuals to seek monetary damages for a violation of law is often critical to the victim being able to obtain legal counsel. The availability of monetary damages provides a fund from which, if successful, a lawyer may be compensated for taking on these challenging cases. In some cases, state or federal law may allow for the recovery of attorney fees in separate actions.

However, in a recent decision that may arguably be limited to only individual suits by incarcerated Plaintiffs, the Supreme Court determined monetary damages are not available against the States.[21] Justice Thomas, writing for the Court, said, "We conclude that States, in accepting federal funding, do not consent to waive their sovereign immunity to private suits for money damages under RLUIPA because no statute expressly and unequivocally includes such a waiver."

Of course, the Court's decision in Sossamon leaves in place the ability of offenders to pursue individual actions to seek changes in correctional policies and practices. The Court also left open the door for Congress to amend the law to include a statutory provision which explicitly and unequivocally allows for the assessment of damages. But moreover, the ability to construct a discrimination claim, available to a monetary award, under 42 U.S.C. 1983; attorney fees claims under the Equal Access to Justice Act; or, other claims of relief are not foreclosed by the Court.

Despite the lack of monetary damages, it is important for Buddhist chaplains to recognize that the legal tools exist to seek resolution to discrimination and prejudice. While the legal system must be employed skillfully and with the proper motivation, Buddhists and the practitioners of all minority faith traditions have the ability to seek recourse for injury or impairment of their religious practice through the Courts of the United States.

[20] Id. At 726.

[21] Sossamon vs. Texas, 563 US ____ (2011)

Practical Constraints On Religious Practice

"So, sue me". That particular refrain constitutes perhaps some of the most frustrating words heard when attempting to deal with religious practice and accommodation in correctional settings. The phrase recognizes at once the frustration of correctional administrations and the intransient position that is often encountered when seeking to negotiate accommodations for incarcerated offenders. Contrary to the aspirational goals of correctional systems in the United States, the primary consideration, in practice, is not rehabilitation of offenders – it is the maintenance of a security environment. Prisons are operated not to foster programming and rehabilitative efforts; inmates are not viewed as "customers" and facilities are not known for their "customer service" ethos. Prisons are operated, predominately, to exercise absolute and complete control over an offender for a determinate or indeterminate period of time. Security is the first and predominant consideration in the operation of correctional facilities.

That is not said to be critical of institutions and their security function. However, there is a need to balance the sometimes contradictory aspirational goals of security and rehabilitation.

Yet, whether one comes to prison chaplaincy work as a volunteer for a particular faith group or as a chaplain for the institution, the security function has to be appreciated. The motives of offenders in "finding religion" are not always pure. While an exploration of motivation and intention are fundamental when examining the nature of conduct in Buddhist ethics; many a new volunteer neglects to judge those motivations of their offender participants – this can have dire consequences.

Further, there are the constraints of budget, time, facilities, and personnel which impact not only the chaplaincy of a prison but the entire accomplishment of its societal mission.

In an attempt to provide an "industry" standard as to the means, methods and processes involved in correctional facility operations, the American Correctional Association has promulgated standards on all aspects of correctional facility operations.

Adherence to these voluntary operational standards provide a baseline for operational decisions and requirements. Aside from training and assessment benefits, institutional adherence to ACA standards can be a strong defense to inmate legal actions. Part 5 of the Standards deal with Inmate Programs and Section F with Religious Programs. (See Appendix A for a brief synopsis of Religious Program Standards.) Generally, the institutional security function can be satisfied while these standards are implemented and executed.

Religious bias can be a constraint upon bringing the Dharma into facilities. Christianity is, in the United States, the predominate faith tradition. It is little surprise that most chaplains within the prison system are Christians. Though diversity increases across the various prison systems with each year, the predominate religious practices remain Christian (Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical denominations), Judaism and Islam. Buddhists are but 1% of the overall prisoner population.[22]

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[22] Prison Incarceration and Religious Preferences, accessed at http://www.adherents.com/misc/adh_prison.html on 9 October 2011.

A rather infamous example of that bias is alleged to have occurred in 2002. At the Donaldson Correctional Facility in Alabama, a ten day Vipassana meditation retreat was conducted. Though conducted behind the walls of a maximum security facility, this retreat was hugely successful. It was conducted by Buddhist faith group volunteers from the surrounding community.

The program was terminated in May of 2002 after the second successful retreat. According to the then director of treatment for the Alabama Department of Corrections, Dr. Ron Cavanaugh, "The chaplain… <an evangelical Christian> … had reservations about inmates turning into Buddhists and losing his congregation." Dr. Cavanaugh went on the explain that the Chaplain, "… called the commissioner; the commissioner called the warden and told the warden to shut down the program."[23]

This bias occurs in other more indirect ways which are compounded by budget constraints. It cannot be discounted that religious accommodation, required under RLUIPA, can have economic consequences on the institutional budget.[24] In this era of decreasing tax revenues, states are increasingly turning to volunteer chaplains.[25]

Good News Jail and Prison Ministry ("GNJPM") is representative of some of the evangelical Christian groups that have stepped up to fill the void.[26] While the organization encompasses within its Mission Statement a nod to other faith transitions, it predominant focus is on bringing the Gospel to inmates. "To meet the spiritual needs of both inmates and staff through ministry that includes evangelism, discipleship, and pastoral attention, while facilitating other religious faiths within the guidelines established by law and the individual correctional facility."[27]

However, the statistics which GNJPM track are indicative that the true emphasis is placed upon evangelism, ministry to Christians and the conversion of non-Christians, rather than chaplaincy. The GNJPM model is to support correctional facilities by providing "Christian chaplains". They are either paid through GNJPM; raise their own funds for support; serve as a true volunteer; or, a combination of the systems. There is an internal conflict in mission sets between an evangelical ministry and chaplaincy, especially with volunteers or those "chaplains" supported by specific faith groups. As Rev. Randall Speer, chaplain at the Central Prison in Raleigh said, "I've never found a volunteer interested in dealing with all religions".[28] And, there is a world of difference in finding a qualified faith group volunteer and a qualified chaplain.

[23] Joiner, Whitney. *Staring at Death and Finding Their Bliss*, New York Times, 13 September 2007, accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/13/movies/13dhar.html on 9 October 2011.

[24] See generally, Stout, Taylor G., *The Costs of Religious Accommodation in Prisons*, 96 Va. L. Rev 1201 (2010)

[25] Shimron, Yonat and Adelle M. Banks, *States Scramble to Find Prison Chaplains After Cuts*, Religion News Service, 8 August 2011, accessed at http://www.religionnews.com/index.php?/rnstext/states_scramble_to_find_prison_chaplains/ on 9 October 2011.

[26] I have the greatest admiration for my colleagues in the faith based programs at the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility ("CTCF") – they are chaplains affiliated with GNJPM. However, as will be discussed, there is an inherent conflict in being a chaplain and having to seek out funding and support from a specific faith tradition based organization which encourages an evangelical approach.

[27] Website, Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, accessed at http://www.goodnewsjail.org/Who/Who.aspx on 9 October 2011.

[28] *State May Do Away with Paid Chaplains*, Salisbury Post, 22 April 2011, accessed at http://www.salisburypost.com/PrinterFriendly/042311-NC-prison-chaplains-qcd.

Without professional chaplaincy programs, the rights of minority faith group members may be at risk.

> Volunteer religious service programs in state correctional institutions may provide a viable alternative for the constitutionally permissible exercise of prisoners' religious rights. The growth of the prison population in the past few decades has placed enormous demands on the states and their ability to safely confine offenders as well as reduce the likelihood that they will offend again in the future. The direct, personal involvement of community volunteers in the corrections system may help inmates to amend their lives and assume a productive p lace in society. At particular risk through voluntary provision are the rights of adherents of minority religions.[29]

Further, volunteer chaplains, while dedicated to their faith tradition, may not be "qualified" in a true sense of conducting chaplaincy.

ACA standard 4-4512 requires a prison chaplain to have clinical pastoral education and endorsement by an appropriate religious certifying body. In fact, the American Correctional Chaplains Association, the oldest subgroup of the American Chaplains Association, requires as a minimum for its basic level of certification 2000 hours of experience as a correctional chaplain; ordination; ecclesiastical endorsement; one unit of clinical pastoral education; twelve credit hours of counseling/ psychology or pastoral care courses; and, three credit hours of religious studies.[30]

Basically, the concept of chaplaincy is vastly different from that of an evangelical ministry. Encompassed within ministry is an element of proselytization; whereas within the construct of a chaplaincy program there is no such element. For today's professional chaplains, proselytizing is considered a breach of ethics. No professional chaplain would even think about trying to convert a patient, inmate, or resident within a closed facility. And, evangelism is by definition the process of converting non-Christians to Christianity.

As inmates are literally a captive and vulnerable audience, proselytizing is rightfully prohibited in most prisons and is contrary to ACA standards and ACCA ethics. "Members exercise their ministry without influencing prisoners or staff to change their religious preference or faith. Members conduct their ministry without communicating derogative attitudes toward other faiths."[31] However, a legal prohibition and the actual practice may differ.

Inmates are regularly subjected to subtle and active forms of proselytizing by dominant faith groups. This can be as subtle as heavily focusing on certain faith programs while limiting others. All faith traditions must be honored and adherents of all faiths should be free of proselytizing pressures from others. However, some correctional systems have accepted offers of "free" chaplains from religious organizations, such as GNJPM, whose agendas are self-centered. The integrity of religious programs can be best ensured by retaining professional correctional chaplains and fully using their expertise.

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[29] Kinney, Nancy T., *The Implications for Inmate Rights of the Voluntary Provision of Religious Services*, Criminal Justice Policy Review 2006 17: 188

[30] Website, American Correctional Chaplains Association, accessed at http://www.correctionalchaplains.org/ on 9 October 2011.

[31] American Correctional Chaplain's Association, *Code of Ethics*.

A chaplain is not a Christian chaplain or a Buddhist chaplain; a chaplain is simply meant to be a Chaplain.

A Day Behind the Walls – Personal Musings

The first day you enter a correctional facility, a sense of claustrophobia easily overtakes your mind. As a Buddhist practitioner, we try not to judge the motivation and intention of others; we focus on our own. But, to survive within the walls, a religious volunteer must quickly understand that offenders come to religion or religious programs for a variety of reasons. A few of these more legitimate reasons can be:

1. Sincere continuation of the religious practices of their life;
2. Pursuit of acceptance from either a peer group or from a higher power;
3. Membership in a religious-based community, negatively viewed as a gang, that may offer the adherent physical protection within the facility;
4. Contact with the outside world;
5. Opportunity to socialize/network within the prison community;
6. Seeking respite and safety – statistically, chapels are among the safest, open access, areas within a facility. Few inmate attacks occur within chapel or in the presence of chaplains;
7. Obtaining material benefits – special diets, holiday treats, etc; and,
8. Programming benefits – recommendations for parole hearings.

Less legitimate motivations can have disastrous consequences for volunteers, chaplains, and the institution. Offenders play games; they are masters at manipulation. They know the rules of a facility; at most times better than the staff members themselves. Often times, offenders cite institutional violations with Regulation Number, Section and Paragraph, when discussing an issue of institutional practice or accommodation. Some offenders will attempt to compromise an unsuspecting and well-intentioned volunteer.

That said, the subtle bias against non-Christian faiths is clear. Within the chapel at Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility ("CTCF"), free Christian materials such as daily devotionals and Bibles are readily available. Prisoners have free access to the materials. However, when I place Buddhist or Islamic materials of a similar nature in the area, they are suddenly disappeared and cloistered in a locked file cabinet.

The Chapel at CTCF is decorated with banners and wall hangings professing Christian views. However, even a simple Buddhist calendar will remain posted on the wall only so long as a Buddhist chaplain is in the room. Christian faith items (i.e. crosses, religious pictures, etc.) are prominently displayed Twenty-Four Hours, Seven Days a Week, while other traditions have their symbols and faith items locked in file cabinet drawers. The Chapel is hardly an ecumenical environment in its daily operations.

Other evangelical Christian groups such as Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc. provide multi-day programs within correctional facilities, including CTCF. The retreats routinely

include excusing offenders from standard counts (out-counting) and providing food prepared outside the institution. Arranging similar activities for non-Christian groups are often times tasks of Herculean effort.

Religious materials and practice items typically must be screened by security authorities. These authorities, who make decisions as to what can be practiced or distributed within the facility, typically come from the security side of the institution. In Colorado, for example, in the State's Department of Corrections Office of Faith and Citizen Programs, which administers the chaplaincy, there are no chaplains or management personnel with religious or pastoral counseling expertise or education. (There is no equivalent to the military's "Chief of Chaplains".) The faith program administrative personnel are promoted from other internal programs. The result is that those items which are different or which are not readily understood will be barred from entry into the facility. The more esoteric the materials of the faith tradition involved, the more restrictive the regulatory environment imposed. This seemingly benign ignorance of other faith traditions, and reliance on popular misconceptions, leads to an understandable and relatively innocent preference of majority faith traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) over minority traditions (Buddhism, Wicca, Hinduism). However, though understandable and innocent, such preferences must be combatted to ensure that the religious freedom of inmates is preserved.

The lack of depth of understanding concerning religious studies also leads to a "one-size" fits all style of religious accommodation for minority faith traditions. Being most familiar with the diversity found in the Christian tradition, denominational based accommodations and variances are common place. However, denominational distinctions are lost in the minority traditions. Prison regulations typically will focus on a single school, in the case of Colorado and Buddhism, it is a more Zen, oddly seasoned with a Theravadan orientation. Varjayana, Pure Land, and other schools are not understood or recognized within the regulatory construct.[32]

Conclusion

Within the United States legal system there exists the tools necessary to ensure that the Dharma can be brought into correctional facilities and that when necessary religious bias and practices discriminatory to minority faith traditions can be addressed successfully. In many cases, the biases and discrimination encountered results from ignorance rather than a malicious motivation. As with all things, reflection and understanding can form the basis for true ecumenical understanding. But, in cases in which ignorance and prejudice are intransient, resort to legal redress and litigation is available and has generally been protective of religious liberties of minority faith tradition practitioners.

Despite the impediments and constraints, the role of being a Chaplain is rewarding and challenging. Being a Chaplain, of a minority faith tradition, increases the challenges and frustrations, but reliance upon the equanimity taught by all Buddhist schools provides the solace and understanding required to meet all the challenges that interfere with the practice. Being a Chaplain and providing pastoral care across the entire spectrum of faith tradition adherents, requires a nibble mind and a compassionate focus.Buddhists are uniquely qualified to be Chaplains.

[32] The Colorado Department of Corrections regulations on religious practices can be accessed at http://www.doc.state.co.us/administrative-regulations/44.

> While pointing out the fundamental similarities between world religions, I do not advocate one particular religion at the expense of all others, nor do I seek a new 'world religion'. All the different religions of the world are needed to enrich human experience and world civilization. Our human minds, being of different caliber and disposition, need different approaches to peace and happiness. It is just like food. Certain people find Christianity more appealing, others prefer Buddhism because there is no creator in it and everything depends upon your own actions. We can make similar arguments for other religions as well. Thus, the point is clear: humanity needs all the world's religions to suit the ways of life, diverse spiritual needs, and inherited national traditions of individual human beings.[33]

Further, the Dalai Lama has clearly and unequivocally stated that "We <Buddhists> oppose conversions by any religious tradition using various methods of enticement."[34] Buddhism is generally recognized as a religion that does not actively engage in proselytizing.

Bringing the Dharma to new lands, allowing the Wheel of Dharma to work for itself, is what prison chaplaincy is all about. A simple "Google" search of "Buddhist prison chaplaincy organization" will lead you on an amazing exploration of this aspect of Buddhist practice and socially engaged Buddhism.

As a faith community and a community of educators and scholars, regardless of school, we need to encourage and support those educational programs that are being developed which train both lay and ordained Buddhists in proper chaplaincy and pastoral counseling. Whether placed in prisons, hospitals, universities or the military services, through chaplaincy Buddhists have the greatest potential to do real good, to bring the Dharma to new lands, and to bring true benefit to all sentient beings, regardless of faith.

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[33] His Holiness the Dalia Lama, *A Human Approach to World Peace*, accessed at http://www.dalailama.com/messages/world-peace/a-human-approach-to-peace on 12 October 2011.

[34] Misra, Neelesh, *Dalia Lama Criticizes Proselytizing*, 25 January 2011, accessed at http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=81617&page=1 on 12 October 2011.

APPENDIX A

ACA STANDARDS FOR ADULT CORRECTIONAL INSITUTIONS
(From Fourth Edition; See actual publication for additional comments)

Part 5: Inmate Programs, Section F: Religious Programs
Principle: A written body of policy and procedure governs the institution's religious programs for inmates, including program coordination and supervision, opportunities to practice the requirements of one's faith, and use of community resources.

4-4512 (Ref. 3-4454) There is qualified chaplain (or chaplains) with minimum qualifications of (1) clinical pastoral education or equivalent specialized training and (2) endorsement by the appropriate religious certifying body. The chaplain assures equal status and protection for all religions.

4-4513 (Ref. 3-4455) In facilities with an average daily population of 500 or more inmates, there is a full-time chaplain (or chaplains). In facilities with less than 500 inmates, adequate religious staffing is available.

4-4514 (Ref. 3-4456) The chaplain plans, directs, and coordinates all aspects of the religious program, including approval and training of both lay and clergy volunteers from faiths represented by the inmate population. [Comment includes "ensuring that all inmates can voluntarily exercise their constitutional right to religious freedom".]

4-4515 (Ref. 3-4457) The chaplain has physical access to all areas of the institution to minister to inmates and staff.

4-4516 (Ref. 3-4458) The chaplain or designated religious staff develops and maintains close relationships with community religious resources. [Comment includes "delivery of appropriate religious services on special religious holidays or, as needed to meet the requirements of the diversity of religious faiths among inmates".]

4-4517 (Ref. 3-4459) Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that inmates have the opportunity to participate in practices of their religious faith that are deemed essential by the faith's judicatory, limited only by documentation showing threat to the safety of persons involved in such activity or that the activity itself disrupts order in the institution. [Lengthy Comment includes listing of religious practices and reference to "determining what constitutes legitimate religious practices".]

4-4518 (Ref. 3-4460) Representatives of all faith groups are available to inmates.

4-4519 (Ref. 3-4460) When a religious leader of an inmate's faith is not represented through the chaplaincy staff or volunteers, the chaplain assists the inmate in contacting a person who has the appropriate credentials from the faith judicatory. That person ministers to the inmate under the supervision of the chaplain. [Comment allows for "designated regular times, with provisions for emergency visits".]

Religious Facilities and Equipment

4-4520 (Ref. 3-4462) Written policy, procedure, and practice require that the institution provide space and equipment adequate for the conduct and administration of religious programs. The institution makes available non-inmate clerical staff for confidential material. [Comment includes “sufficient space”, etc.]

4-4521 (Ref. 3-4463) The chaplain, in cooperation with the institutional administrator or designee, develops and maintains communications with faith communities and approves donations of equipment or materials for the use in religious programs. [Comment includes “helps avoid the accumulation of duplicate or inappropriate materials”.]

Additional References to Religious Programs [bold emphasis added]**:**

Part 4: Institutional Services, Section F: Social Services
Principle: The institution makes available the professional services necessary to meet the identified needs of inmates. Such services may include individual and family counseling, family planning, and parent education, and programs for inmates with drug and alcohol addiction problems.

4-4429 (Ref. 3-4380-1) Written policy, procedure, and practice prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, programs, and activities administered for program beneficiaries and participants. [Comment includes “**religious programs**” in services, programs and activities.]

4-4430 (Ref. 3-4381) Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that institutional staff identify at least annually the needs of the inmate population to ensure that necessary programs and services are available, including programs and services to meet the needs of inmates with specific types of problems. [Comment includes “**religious**” in programs and services.]

Reception and Orientation

4-4287 (Ref. 3-4274) There is a program for inmates during the reception period. [Comment includes “**be permitted to attend religious services**”.]

Part 1: Administration and Management, Section C: Personnel
Principle: A written body of policy and procedure establishes the institution’s staffing, recruiting, promotion, benefits, and review procedure for employees.

Staffing Requirements

4-4050 (Ref. 3-4050) The staffing requirements for all categories of personnel are determined on an ongoing basis to ensure that inmates have access to staff, programs, and services. [Comment includes “**religious programs**” in staffing requirements.]

Part 3: Institutional Programs, Access to Programs and Services

4-4277 (Ref. 3-4265) Written policy, procedure, and practice prohibit discrimination based on an inmate's race, **religion**, national origin, sex, disability, or political views in making administrative decisions and in providing access to programs. [Comment includes "Inmates should be assured equal opportunities to participate".]

Part 3: Institutional Operations: Administrative Segregation/Protective Custody

4-4273 (Ref. 3-4261) Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that inmates in administrative segregation and protective custody have access to programs and services that include, but are not limited to, the following: educational services, commissary services, library services, social services, counseling services, **religious guidance**, and recreational programs.

Section C: Food Service

4-4319 (Ref. 3-4300) Written policy, procedure, and practice provide for special diets for inmates whose **religious beliefs** require the adherence to **religious dietary laws**. [Comment includes "**Religious diets** should be approved by the chaplain".]

(Reprinted from the American Correctional Chaplains Association, http://www.correctional chaplains.org/aca_prison_standards.pdf, accessed on 8 October 2011, which was extracted from the ACA Standards, Fourth Edition.)

Acting Out: Thai American Buddhists Encounters with White Privilege and White Supremacy

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This article examines Thai American Buddhist communities and their expressions in the United States. Anchored in ethnographic data, it takes a socio-historical approach. Asian Buddhist communities have encountered xenophobia, American white *ethnocentrism, Orientalism, and cultural imperialism, which have directly and indirectly transformed the shapes and contours of Buddhist communities and their practices in America. The expressions of Buddhism by Asian American Buddhists are unlike those found in Asia. This is not to suggest that there is a loss or a gain; rather, it highlights the flexibility and adaptability of Buddhism to conform to American society. This is not new in the history of Buddhism. New forms of Buddhism, new ways of passing, transmitting, and teaching the dhamma develop over time and in different locations. Examining these locations, both historically and in contemporary life, reveals the complexity of social relationships among various Asian, Buddhist, and non-Asian, non-Buddhist communities. Due to historical, political, economic, and social conditions, Asian* Buddhist communities have encountered and have resolved different forms of racial discrimination in different ways — for better or worse, successfully or unsuccessfully. Two interlocking questions are examined in this article: How can Thai American Buddhist communities in the United States teach, live, and practice the dhamma harmoniously with neighboring communities of different ethnic backgrounds and faith traditions? How have Thai American Buddhists negotiated their encounters with expressions of white privilege — subtle and unambiguous — that sustains the ideology of white supremacy?

Introduction

Melvin Urofsky counters the popular common understanding that the freedom of religion is a Constitutional guarantee that began with the birth of the United States. Urofsky argues that the pilgrims came to America to practice their religion freely, "*not to allow other groups, which they believed to be in error, to worship as well*."[2] Religious tolerance, Urofsky asserts, is an *epiphenomenon.* "The colonies and later the country first developed religious toleration and then freedom not because particular sects stopped believing they alone knew the true word of God, but because so many different groups came in search of a better life."[3] As such, the new frontier became more diverse and it became necessary for people to learn to live with one another peacefully; thus,

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[2] Melvin L. Urofsky, *Religious Freedom: Rights and Liberties under the Law* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 2.

[3] Ibid.

they “learned tolerance as a necessity, and then turned it into a virtue.”[4] The necessity and virtue of tolerance requires constant work to sustain it. Americans by-and-large subscribe to the idea that the individual has the right to choose his/her beliefs and practices, and that government has no business interfering with religious matters. A cursory examination of the interplay between religion and politics in the United States would indicate that it is not absolute. An underlying assumption of the freedom of religion clause is that individuals can practice their religion — as long as it is a Judeo-Christian variant. The religious landscape in America privileges Christianity; the racial landscape privileges white individuals. The intersection of race and religion here creates what Peggy McIntosh describes as the socio-cultural phenomenon of “white privilege.”[5] White privilege includes mundane quotidian effects, for example: the accessibility of being around other white people, the ability to rent or buy a house in any neighborhood that one can afford, and the freedom to go shopping at any time and be assured that one will not be followed or harassed.[6] McIntosh directs our attention to a subtle aspect of racism as being not mere individual acts of “meanness” but rather, as “invisible systems of conferring dominance on my [white] group.”[7] Since racial order is nested in a socio-political hierarchy that privileges white, Christian, male individuals and social groups, white privilege is inherently religious. Joseph Cheah describes white privilege in terms of an ideology of white supremacy, which he defines as “a hegemonic understanding, on the part of both whites and non-whites, that white Euro-American culture, values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices are the norm according to which other cultures and social practices are judged.”[8] Cheah’s insights are useful for how we understand race relations in the United States. White privilege does not replicate itself, but rather, is in a dialectical relationship with non-whites who also play a part in replicating white privilege, albeit implicitly and, perhaps, unconsciously. White privilege and the ideology of white supremacy are expressively written in movements that oppose the building of Asian religious temples in America. There are many cases of white majority neighbors that mobilize in an effort to stop the building of Asian religious temples in “their” communities. This article seeks to unpack their coded messages and reveal their underlying expressions of white privilege embedded in, and informed by, an ideology of white supremacy.

Building Asian Religious Temples in America

There is a plethora of cases of white majority residents who mobilize against the construction of an Asian religious temple in “their” neighborhoods. The largest Chinese Buddhist monastery in North America, the Hsi Lai Si (西來寺 Coming West Temple) began construction in 1986, although the land had been purchased in 1978. The temple was completed in 1988. White Euro-American residents opposed the construction of the temple, citing that it would not fit in with the landscape of residential single-family homes, would increase traffic and noise, and would be a “jarringly inappropriate cultural presence.”[9] Residents opposing the construction of the temple cited traffic as their greatest concern.[10] Opponents problematically acted out of ignorance as illustrated by their

[4] Ibid.
[5] Peggy McIntosh, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, 1988.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Joseph Cheah, Negotiating Race and Religion in American Buddhism: Burmese Buddhism in California. Unpublished dissertation (Graduate Theological Union. Berkeley, California. 2004), 1.
[9] Irene Lin, Journey to the Far West: Chinese Buddhism in America. *Amerasia Journal* 22:1 (1996): 110.
[10] Mayerene Baker, Buddhist Vision of Temple Complex Clashes with Real World. *Los Angeles Times* (February 21, 1982).

erroneous fear of animal sacrifices. Their list of complaints illustrates that they knew nothing about Buddhist beliefs and practices.[11] Irene Lin notes:

> Other concerns resulted from the community's misunderstanding of Buddhism and Chinese culture, including noise from chanting of sutras, gongs, and firecrackers; the "adverse influence" on the youth resulting from the unfamiliar clothing of Buddhist monks and nuns; the unfounded fear of animal sacrifices on the temple site (and thus the fear for neighborhood dogs because "the Chinese all eat dog meat"); and the worry that the children might be entrapped by the new "religious cult."[12]

After six public hearings and more than one hundred meetings, the Hacienda Heights City council granted Hsi Lai Temple a construction permit. In the process, Hsi Lai Temple made several concessions, agreeing to: eliminate the pagoda and Buddha statue; restrict building height to only two stories; reduce the number of buildings (15 buildings were eliminated); and to reduce the overall size by 15,000 square feet.[13] Additionally, Hsi Lai Temple agreed to change the color of the roof and the buildings, taking extra measures to decrease fire risk from incense, and limiting its parking spaces to prevent too many people from attending the temple at once.[14] Today, the Hsi Lai Temple encompasses 15 acres and a floor area of 102,432 square feet. The temple's Ming Dynasty (1268–1644 C.E.) and Ching Dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.) architecture is faithful to the traditional style of buildings, gardens, and statuary of traditional ancient Chinese monasteries, but not as brightly colored or opulent.

A little more than a decade later, the Sikh community of San Jose, California faced similar racially-charged objections against their efforts to build a new *gurdwara*, Sikh temple, on a 40-acre apricot orchard it had purchased. Similar to Hsi Lai Temple's experience, the Sikh community purchased land in an affluent rural community (i.e., San Jose's Evergreen foothills). The predominantly white neighborhood perceived the *gurdwara* as a "threat."[15] The opponents dubbed the temple the "Taj Mahal of the West" and cited concerns about increased traffic and the size of the giant onion-domed temple as their primary reasons for opposing the construction.[16] Flyers with inflammatory statements such as, "A church the size of K-Mart is coming to the neighborhood, and it will create major traffic problems!" appeared throughout the community during the days leading up to the hearing.[17] Opponents cited five reasons for objecting to the *gurdwara*: increase in traffic, noise from the temple, the architecture would not fit into the neighborhood landscape, the temple would be too large and would obstruct the view of the natural surroundings, and tourists would flood the area because of the novelty of the new *gurdwara.*[18] "In order to accommodate their neighbors, the Sikhs had already agreed to putting a cap of 1500 people in the facility at any one time, as well as accepting restrictions on the operating hours of the *gurdwara*. In fact, no other site of worship in San Jose has any such strictures on time of services or size of congregation applied to it."[19]

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Lin, 110.
[13] Jack Birkinshaw, Buddhist Temple Gets OK to Build. *Los Angeles Times* (June 2, 1983); and Baker.
[14] Lin, 110.
[15] Jaideep Singh, The Racialization of Minoritized Religious Identity: Constructing Sacred Sites at the Intersection of White and Christian Supremacy. Jane Naomi Iwamura and Paul Spickard, eds. *Revealing the Sacred in Asian and Pacific America* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 90.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid, 91.
[18] Ibid, 92.
[19] Ibid.

Opponents claimed their opposition was not on the basis of race or religious intolerance. But, the Sikh community experienced it differently and viewed it as a “subtle” form of racism. “This constant shifting of grievances and proffering of new complaints once previous claims had been assuaged, manifests a powerful indictment of some members of the opposition. Their true dissatisfaction obviously lay in areas other than the ostensible objections they mouthed — and repeatedly changed.”[20] During the city’s final approval meeting some opponents outwardly declared, “We don’t want it in *our* neighborhood.”[21] “Nevertheless, the progressive political atmosphere in the region, as well as the general emphasis on supporting diversity by city officials and numerous faith-based community leaders, became a tremendous boon to the Sikh community as they sought support for the *gurdwara* project from non-Sikh members of the community.”[22] Since the 1960s, other Asian American communities have experienced and encountered similar expressions of white privilege that maintains an ideology of white supremacy.

The growth of Theravada Buddhist temples throughout the United States centered along the east and west coasts during the early 1970s. Sri Lankan and Thai Buddhist temples were the first to be established, with a concentration in California. “By the end of the 1970s, Theravada Buddhist centers had been established or initiated by Sri Lankans, Thais, Burmese, Cambodians, Laotians, and native-born Americans in the United States, and a native-born American had received higher Buddhist ordination on American soil.”[23] This growth was punctuated by encounters with racism as witnessed by Cambodians and Laotians, as well as by subtler expressions of racism and white privilege anchored in an ideology of white supremacy.

Building Theravada Buddhist Temple in America

The 1970s have been described as a decade of *stagflation,* an unprecedented mixture of double-digit unemployment and inflation rates.[24] These economic conditions impacted how Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees were received in the wake of the Fall of Saigon in April 1975. Theravadian Buddhist temple building comes with a backlash from xenophobic neighbors who — under the guise of zoning laws and regulations — invoke their privilege supported by the ideology of white supremacy in attempts to stop the building of temples in their neighborhoods, as evidenced by an example in Silver Spring, Maryland, where, in 2008, neighbors counted cars and kept detailed records and photos of people visiting the temple during festival celebrations. The Maryland State Supreme Court denied the group, then known as the Khmer Buddhist Society, a permit to build a temple on Newtown Hilltop. Afterwards, the Newtown Zoning Board presented the Khmer Buddhist Society with an order to “cease all religious services and festivals permanently.”[25] In the late 1980s Laotian refugees in Rockford, Illinois, a rural blue-collar town, faced extreme violence in their attempt to build a temple on a small farmstead on the outskirts of town. The Laotian temple was the target of a firebomb and drive-by rifle fire. Although Burmese Buddhist communities have not received the level of opposition with respects to their establishment of religious temples,

[20] Ibid, 94.
[21] Ibid, 92, emphasis added.
[22] Ibid, 90.
[23] Wendy Cadge, *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 32.
[24] Michael C. LeMay, *U.S. Immigration: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), xv.
[25] Elizabeth Hamilton, A Battle Over Rites and Rights. *Hartford Courant* (July 19, 2008).

the Alohtaw Pyayt Dhamma Yeiktha (APDY) in the City of El Sobrante, California, received complaints from its predominantly white neighbors soon after the home temple was established on November 1998.[26] Joseph Cheah notes that members of the Burmese Buddhist community "received complaints from the city that there were 'weird' gatherings of people there and they were cultish."[27] Here again, neighbors complained about noise, traffic, and parking. "Because most residents would declaim that they possess any discriminatory sentiment or religious bias against the presence of a non-Christian place of worship in their neighborhood, the words 'traffic' and 'noise' have, at times, become *code words for covert racism*."[28]

Unlike their Cambodian and Laotian neighbors, Thai Americans did not come to the United States as refugees. The first settlements of Thai immigrants did not appear until the late 1960s, immigrating to America for many different reasons. Thai migration to the United States was fueled in the 1960s and 1970s by Thailand's social and political upheaval in combination with changes in U.S. immigration policy that lifted the ban on immigration from Asia. The *Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965* also established a preference for skilled labor. Therefore, the first wave of Thai immigrants primarily consisted of doctors, nurses, and other white-collar professionals.[29] In particular, a shortage of nurses in the United States drew large numbers of Thai immigrants. In the late 1960s the American government began to give a warm welcome to Thai nurses by offering green cards to them right upon their landing on American soil. Additionally, an increased number of Thai students immigrated for educational purposes, although that goal was not achieved as easily as expected. Thai exchange students faced financial hardships and unexpected scholastic demands were compounded by language problems that made successful completion of a degree impossible. Those who dropped out did not return to Thailand, but instead, found unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Later, when their student visas expired, many petitioned for a change of status to permanent resident. Since the passage of the *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1984*, a change in status became nearly impossible. Further, another group of Thai immigrants came as wives of U.S. service personnel stationed in Thailand during the Vietnam War. Similar to immigrants from other parts of the world, Thai immigrants brought their religion and religious institutions with them. The growing number of Thai temples throughout the United States attests to the growing presence of Thai Americans. "Today 105 *wats* can be found scattered throughout North America in 32 states, including six temples in Canada."[30] Nearly 30 percent of the temples are located in California.[31]

The formation of Thai Buddhism in America unfolded in two phases. Initially it was a top-down formation that was spearheaded by royal, ecclesial, and civil authorities in Thailand, who in the mid 1950s and 1960s sought to expand Thai Buddhism beyond its geographical and national borders.[32] During this period, Thailand envisioned itself as a "world center of Buddhism." As such, it funded the development of the first transnational Thai temples under royal patronage in India in 1959, with the construction of Wat Thai Buddha-Gaya, then in the United Kingdom in 1965, with Wat Buddhapadipa. There were also plans to construct a Thai temple in New York's Staten Island, but

[26] Cheah, 181.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid, emphasis added.
[29] Susan Aurebach, 1994, cited in Jenjira Yahirun, Thai Immigrants. Ronald H. Bayor, ed. *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans* Volume 4 (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), 2105.
[30] Todd LeRoy Perreria, Thai Americans: Religion. Jonathan H. X. Lee and Kathleen Nadeau, eds. *Encyclopedia of Asian American Folklore and Folklife* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 1110.
[31] Thai Temples in North America http://www.dharmanet.org/Dir/thai-wat.html (last accessed September 9, 2011).
[32] Perreria, 2011, 1110.

the plan was aborted due to complications, while simultaneously a group of Thai immigrants and American-born Buddhists successfully formed the Buddhist Study Center in New York as a legal entity in 1965.[33] This event, followed by the 1972 establishment of the first and largest Thai temple in Los Angeles, foreshadowed a new bottom-up, lay-centered approach in the institutionalization of Thai Buddhism in the United States. "In June 1971 a mission of Thai monks led by Ven. Phra Dharmakosajarn arrived in Los Angeles, and lay people began to raise funds to purchase land. In 1972, land was donated and construction began on a main hall, a two-story Thai-style building that was completed and dedicated in 1979."[34] The bottom-up approach maintained close links with Thai royalty and high-ranking civil servants, but was financed and led by the growing Thai immigrant population in America. Wendy Cadge notes, "Buddha images for the shrine hall and two sets of scriptures were carried to the United States by monks and lay people from Thailand, and in 1979 His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen of Thailand presided over the casting of the principal Buddha image for the temple at Wat Po (officially called Wat Phra Chetuphon, or the Monastery of the Reclining Buddha) in Thailand."[35] Throughout the 1970s Thai immigrants established Thai temples in several metropolitan areas: Washington D.C., Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco. This growth in the United States necessitated the formation of the Council of Thai Bhikkhus to act as liaison for the missionary monks that were coming from Thailand to serve the growing community; the Council was established in 1977.[36] Cadge describes the general process of Thai temple building from the bottom-up approach:

> Most Thai temples followed similar patterns in their development. A group of lay people in a given city who were interested in building a temple first formed a committee to consider the issues involved. They often sought advice from the monks at Wat Thai L.A. or Wat Thai Washington, D.C., or from monks that they knew in Thailand. Often a monk came to the area to visit and meet with people, and then the committee started to collect donations from Thai people in the area. An apartment or single-family house would be rented or purchased and monks would take up residence, normally from Thailand rather than from another temple in the United States. Many temples remain in these original buildings now, while others, particularly those that continued to accumulate financial resources, purchased new buildings or land and often began to build Thai-style buildings…. Some temples, like Wat Phrasriratanaram Buddhist Temple of St. Louis, moved into existing buildings, in this case a former Assemblies of God church. In many cases, the traditional rules regarding the construction of temples were amended slightly, for example, when portions of temples normally housed in separate buildings in Thailand were combined for reasons of cost or practicality. The distinctions between commercial and residential zoning were particularly challenging for many Thai and other Asian temples, and many had to relocate to areas zoned for religious gatherings.[37]

[33] Ibid.
[34] Cadge, 27
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid, 33.

Because the majority of Thais in Thailand, America, and within the Thai diaspora are mainly Buddhist, Buddhist rituals and beliefs are key to being Thai in America. In Buddhist custom, people can go to a temple any day to offer food to the monk(s), as a part of religious practice called *thumbun*, literally meaning making merit. Buddhist monks (and nuns) are the most serious Buddhist learners and practitioners, providing a role model of Buddhism for the common people. In addition to conducting Buddhist rituals, monks are supposed to lead and teach the way of Buddhism. Although there are some Thai-American-born monks, the majority of monks in the United States are invited from Thailand. Currently, there are more than 482 Thai monks in 105 temples across America. The greater the number of monks at the temple, the larger the community; and the larger the community, the greater the likelihood they will be a target of white supremacy and coded expressions of racism.

Berkeley's Wat Mongkolratanaram

Wat Mongkolratanaram, locally referred to as the Berkeley Thai Temple, was established in 1978,[38] when a group of volunteers formed a small temple committee and invited two visiting monks from Thailand to serve as spiritual leaders and assist with building the temple. In 1981 the temple received non-profit status as a religious organization, and established the Thai Buddhist temple and cultural center at its current Russell Street location in the City of Berkeley. By 2001 the temple was recognized as an official Thai Buddhist *ubosoth*, or place of worship, in full accordance with Theravada Buddhist doctrines. For nearly three decades the Berkeley Thai Temple held a Sunday Food Offering — locally called the Thai Temple Sunday brunch — where members of the temple prepared and served food to visitors — Buddhist, non-Buddhist, Thais, non-Thais. Thai and Thai American Buddhists who volunteer at the Sunday brunch understand their work as an expression of *thambun*, or merit-making. Merit, is the counter of *karma*, which Buddhists believe chains all living creatures in the endless cycles of reincarnation and suffering, known as *samsara*. Merit, as the counterweight of *karma*, may be gained primarily by supporting the community of monks and nuns, by assisting the needy, or through Buddhist meditation. Merit is also transferable. Hence, the living may perform rituals and offerings to earn merit, which may then be transferred to their beloved to assist them in the afterlife and in being reborn into the human realm. From a Thai American perspective, volunteers at the Berkeley Thai Temple engage in the religio-cultural practice of *thambun*, which in turn, sustains the temple for the community, and the livelihood of the Thai monks who reside there. In addition, the temple offers Thai language and cultural classes and programs.

[38] Wat Mongkolratanaram's Application for a Broader Land Use Permit.



Wat Mongkolratanaram, September 13, 2011

(Photo by Jonathan H. X. Lee)

The popular Sunday Food Offering came under attack in 2008 when the Berkeley Thai Temple applied to the City of Berkeley's Zoning Adjustments Board to build a Buddha Hall (*bood*) larger than the size allowed by the municipal code. The Buddha Hall would be 16 feet wide, 24 feet long, and 44 feet high (including a 14-foot spire), the proposed sanctuary would include three Buddha statues on a raised platform.[39] Nineteen neighbors who reside on Oregon Street gathered to protest the proposed expansion of the temple, citing that the "architecture" would change the character of the residential neighborhood.[40] Additionally, upon discovering that the temple's 1993 zoning permit only allowed for food to be served three times a year, Oregon Street residents used this opportunity to voice their concern about the Sunday Food Offering. They cited it as "detrimental" to the health of the neighborhood, and suggested that the food service be moved to a different site because it created noise, parking and traffic problems, litter in the neighborhood, and was the source of "offensive odors."[41] The Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board investigated the allegations, and

[39] Rachel Swan, Food-Free Zone? Berkeley City Planners May Finally Resolve the Beef over Sunday Thai Breakfasts. *East Bay Express* (January 21, 2009).

[40] Letter to Greg Powell, City of Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board Land Use Planning Division, from opposing residents on Oregon Street (April 17, 2008).

[41] Pahole Sookkasikon, Fragrant Rice Queen: The Hungry Ghost of Anna Leonowens and Thai/America. Unpublished MA thesis (San Francisco State University, 2010), 122–124

". . . announced in June that the Berkeley Thai Temple had repeatedly exceeded the number of events allowed by its use permit. Although no one was able to ascertain just how long the temple had been violating its permit, the board agreed to give the temple a chance to modify the original permit and address neighborhood concerns."[42] Further, the board urged mediation to resolve the conflict. A *Save the Thai Temple* press release notes that "The Temple immediately responded to these concerns by undertaking extensive measures to participate in three mediation sessions with the complainants, cut its Sunday service hours in half, implement a neighborhood litter patrol, relocate the preparation of its food items, secure an exclusive parking lot from a nearby retailer, and actively reach out to its neighbors."[43] Christina Jirachachavalwong, organizer of the SavetheThaiTemple.com website notes, "We've reduced our early morning preparation hours, we've put up signs all over the neighborhood, reminding people not to park in driveways, not to litter, we've sent a trash patrol around the neighborhood . . . These concessions have 'severely impacted our financial situation' but have not satisfied the complainants."[44]



Model of proposed new construction and Buddha Hall, September 25, 2011

(Photo by Jonathan H. X. Lee)

The temple's weekly Sunday Food Offering is well attended by upwards of 600 visitors. Some Oregon Street residents said, "We believe we have a right to reside in peace, to enjoy our residential neighborhood without a large commercial restaurant in our midst."[45] After the initial hearing about the zoning problem, the Berkeley Thai Temple was granted a zoning adjustment. While this was good news for the temple and its supporters, at the hearing there had been accusations that the foods served at the temple were drugged. Some opponents of the temple's food service complained that they were forced to live with odors. Other complaints were more focused. As recorded in *The Wall Street Journal*:

[42] Riya Bhattacharjee, Berkeley Thai Temple to Ask ZAB to Allow Year-Round Sunday Brunch. *The Berkeley Daily Planet: The East Bay's Independent Newspaper* (September 18, 2008).
[43] *Save the Thai Temple* Press Release, November 7, 2008.
[44] Andrew Lee, Under Attack: Community Rallies Around Berkeley Thai Temple. *AsianWeek* (December 29, 2008).
[45] Geoffrey A. Flower, Brunch as a Religious Experience Is Disturbing Berkeley's Karma. *The Wall Street Journal* (February 10, 2009).

> "We have no opposition to Buddhism," says Ms. Shoulders, the neighbor. "We have no problem with Thai culture. We even actually like Thai food." All she is seeking, she says, is changes in the temple's operations.[46]

Other neighbors expressed their support of the temple's Sunday Food Offering. As noted in a *Save the Thai Temple* press release:

> Since spring 2008, the steady outpouring of community support to preserve the Temple has attested to its 27 years of spiritual and cultural contributions to the Bay Area. Immediate neighbors from Russell and Otis Streets circulated a petition in favor of Sundays at the Temple and received more than 2,300 signatures, including 800 Berkeley residents and 106 neighbors residing in the immediate vicinity of the Temple grounds. Students from UC Berkeley have voiced their support through the student government, the Associated Students of the University of California [at Berkeley] (ASUC), which passed a Senate Bill in support of the Temple. Additionally, Asian Pacific Islander American community organizations like the Asian Law Caucus have rallied support for the Temple. Debbie Sheen, Housing and Community Development staff attorney at the Caucus said, "*The weekly event is an important space for the Thai community in the Bay Area, and ending the Sunday Food Offering tradition is a detriment not only to the Thai community but also to the cultural diversity of Berkeley.*"[47]

Martha Chazanoff voiced her support in a letter to the City Planner, saying, "As a homeowner on Otis Street, I would like to express my support for Wat Mongkolratanaram on Russell Street . . . . The brunch that is held weekly brings a wonderful element of community-minded, conscientious, and peaceful people to the neighborhood — both old and young. I will admit that parking is a little tight on Sunday, but I would attribute at least part of that to the Asbhy Flea Market . . . ."[48] Chazanoff goes on to say that the Thai temple is "[a] wonderful, wonderful element of our neighborhood. Anyone that is upset by the hustle and bustle of the Sunday Brunch should consider that other 163 hours of the week when it is quiet at the temple and few people are noticeably congretating [sic] there. Their property is well maintained; their landscaping is better than most in the neighborhood."[49]

Some may argue that the Berkeley Thai Temple has become a victim of its own success and popularity.[50] Those who supported the Berkeley Thai Temple and wanted to save the food service argued that there is a direct connection between saving the food service and saving the temple because 80 percent of the temple's total revenue was raised by the weekly food service. Chinda Blaschczyk, long time volunteer at the Berkeley Thai Temple, states, "We are not a business; we rely on the donations we receive . . . . If we are not able to serve food on Sundays, I truly believe the temple will be shut down completely."[51] In addition, the revenue was used to support Thai language and cultural classes offered by the temple, as Komson Thong, president of the Thai Association of

46 Ibid.
47 *Save the Thai Temple* Press Release, November 7, 2008.
48 Martha S. Chazanoff's email to Greg Powell (July 12, 2008).
49 Ibid.
50 As a resident, homeowner, and supporter of the *Save the Thai Temple*, this author supports his neighbors' rights to challenge the loud early morning noise and excessive traffic that they feel adversely impacts the quality of life of the neighborhood.
51 Lee, Under Attack: Community Rallies around Berkeley Thai Temple.

Northern California, told the Planning Board, "[the] proceeds from the weekend fund raisers went towards subsidizing costs for students who came to the Thai temple to learn Thai, meditate and dabble in other cultural programs."[52] Siwaraya Rochanahusdin, who teaches intermediate and advanced Thai to children and adults at the temple, said a large number of Thai Americans from the East Bay sent their children to the temple school to learn Thai and traditional music and dance.[53]



Thai American youth learning Thai music, July 20, 2009

(Photo courtesy of Siwaraya Rochanahusdin)

Unlike the challenges to the Hsi Lai Temple and the Sikh *gurdwara*, the Berkeley Thai Temple had enjoyed relative peace in the neighborhood before the plans to build a large Buddha Hall sparked the community conflict. As Thai American youth activist, Christina Jirachachavalwong, says, "I've been coming here for over 11 years . . . and we've never had a complaint."[54] Similar to opponents objecting to the construction of the Hsi Lai Temple and the Sikh *gurdwara*, residents on Oregon Street cited parking, traffic, noise, and crowds as their primary reasons for wanting a reduction on the food services as well as to block the construction of the Buddha Hall. The underlying racial privilege informed by an ideology of white supremacy is thinly masked as traffic and noise control, but nonetheless is revealed in comments concerning food odors or comparison of the food service to a commercial restaurant. While speaking at the public hearing, an Oregon Street resident who described herself as a medical doctor compared the temple's proposed Buddha Hall to McDonald's

[52] Riya Bhattacharjee, City Tells Thai Temple, Angry Neighbors to Reach Middle Ground. *The Berkeley Daily Planet: The East Bay's Independent Newspaper* (September 25, 2008).
[53] Bhattacharjee, Berkeley Thai Temple to Ask ZAB to Allow Year-Round Sunday Brunch.
[54] Lee, Under Attack: Community Rallies around Berkeley Thai Temple.

golden arches and said the Sunday food was "addictive," similar to McDonald's fast food as seen in the documentary *Supersize Me*.[55] By disregarding, either willfully or out of ignorance, the religious dimension of the Sunday food offering, opponents secularize the Thai temple community and vulgarize their activity. A Thai American youth asked, "How many people would sign a petition to save a McDonald's in your neighborhood?"[56]

Another opponent, Thomas Rough, writes in his letter of protest to a senior planner in the City of Berkeley:

> The neighbors said the weekend cooking odors were *overwhelming* and *unacceptable*, and the *ingress of hundreds* each weekend *overwhelmed* their quiet streets and their expected lives. They insisted the *feeding* be very sharply reduced in numbers and frequency — *or find another place to do this feeding*.[57]

Pahole Sookkasikon notes that the use of the word "feeding" connotes the religio-cultural activities at the Thai Temple and the Thai Americans themselves as akin to livestock and, thus, "belittles" them as subhuman.[58] I concur with Sookkasikon for noting that the rhetoric transgresses Thai American subjectivity and humanity. In addition, it highlights the necessity for tolerance that is susceptible to the forces of intolerance for religious pluralism that envelopes contemporary American society in the post-9/11 era.



Thai American youth at Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board hearing, February 12, 2009

(Photo courtesy of Pahole Yotin Sookkasikon)

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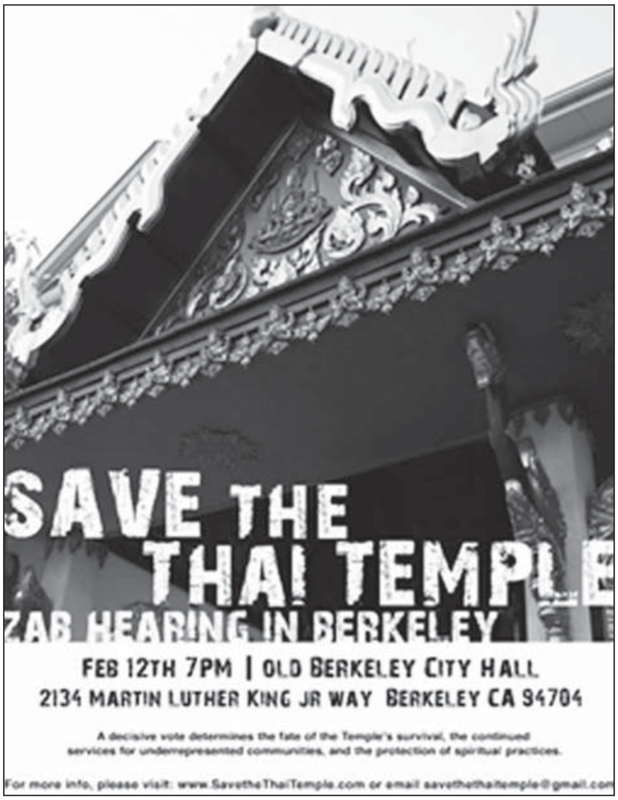
55 Save the Berkeley Thai Temple Youtube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS_Wev54X5E (last accessed September 12, 2011).

56 *Save the Thai Temple*, http://savethethaitemple.com/?page_id=2 (last accessed September 12, 2011).

57 Cited in Sookkasikon, 124.

58 Sookkasikon, 125.

Thai American Youth Acting Out



Save the Thai Temple flyer

(Photo courtesy of Pahole Yotin Sookkasikon)

In order to address the complaints lodged against their temple and their community, which Thai American youth activists viewed as a subtle expression of racism, they formed the Save the Thai Temple Campaign.[59] Thai American youth acted as advocated for their parents, grandparents, and community elders who did not have a strong command of English and local codes and politics. Members of the campaign were youths who had grown up with the Berkeley Thai Temple. “They launched an awareness campaign to educate the general public on Thai Buddhist practices and the religious significance of merit-making (*thumboon*).”[60] They distributed Action Alerts, utilizing social media such as Facebook, Youtube, and MySpace to garner support and mobilize their supporters.[61] The Action Alerts encouraged supporters of the Berkeley Thai Temple to call all nine members of the Berkeley City Council and leave the following message:

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59 Ibid, 113–117.

60 Virada Chatikul, Wat Mongkolratanaram and the Thai Cultural Center: A Model for Intergenerational Collaboration and Thai American Leadership Development. Jonathan H. X. Lee and Roger Viet Chung, eds. *Contemporary Issues in Southeast Asian American Studies* (San Diego, CA: Cognella Academic Publishing, 2011), 70.

61 *Save the Thai Temple*, http://savethethaitemple.com/?p=158 (last accessed September 12, 2011).

Hello, my name is ***[your name]***, and I'm calling to urge the Berkeley's City Council to re-affirm the Zoning Board's approval of the weekly Sunday Food Offering activities at the Thai Buddhist Temple. The Temple should be allowed to continue its religious practice of food-sharing and merit-making. I urge you to support this Berkeley tradition because it is vital to our community.[62]

In addition, they encouraged supporters to write emails to all members of the Berkeley City Council with the following message:

Dear Councilmember:

I am writing to express my concern at the possible appeal of the Zoning Adjustments Board's decision of the weekly Sunday Food Offering at the Thai Buddhist Temple in Berkeley. I strongly urge you to support the ZAB's judgment as well as this beloved 28-year-old Berkeley tradition because citizens like me have benefited from the Temple's longstanding presence in Berkeley.

1. The Sunday Food Offering activities are an important religious practice for Buddhists. Food-sharing is an essential aspect of contributing to and receiving Buddhist merit. The practice of creating a space where monks, volunteers, neighbors, and patrons alike can engage in food sharing is part of merit-earning. The Food Offering activities have become the center of the Temple's spiritual activities.

2. The Temple has been and continues to be a good Berkeley neighbor. In the past 27 years, no complaints have been filed against the Temple until the recent months. In light of the recent complaints, the Temple has not only addressed the specific concerns of the complainants, but it also has undertaken efforts to continue to be a considerate community partner through surveys and land use impact studies.

3. The Temple is a critical community institution for the Thai community. Shutting down the Sunday Food Offering activities would have devastating effects on the Thai community that relies on the Temple as a support network and the center of Thai culture. The Thai community urgently needs places like the Temple to allow the community to grow.

Berkeley is counting on you to save this important and dynamic part of the Berkeley community.[63]

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[62] *Save the Thai Temple* Action Alert.

[63] Ibid.



Save the Thai Temple supporters at the Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board hearing wearing gold and green "I support the Thai Temple" stickers, September 25, 2008

(Photo courtesy of Siwaraya Rochanahusdin)

On September 22, 2009, the Berkeley City Council voted unanimously (9–0) in favor of the broader land use permits granted by the Zoning Adjustments Board in a decision favoring the Berkeley Thai Temple, Wat Mongkolratanaram. In a *Save the Thai Temple* press release, Siwaraya Rochanahusdin, a Thai American who had grown up at the Temple, said, "The Temple offers an invaluable range of services to an otherwise underserved population. Discontinuing the weekly food offering would deny this community access to spiritual and educational opportunities not readily found elsewhere."[64] Youth leaders and activists of *Save the Thai Temple* posted congratulatory comments on Facebook thanking all their supporters. One post called the unanimous vote "a stunner." However, an over the top remark was posted by a Euro-American man who writes:

> You people, leave the neighbors alone. Your clanging and monotonous chanting are annoying [sic] enough, and you want more? Go back to your trees because its [sic] not welcome here at berkeley [sic]. BTW haven't you heard of Jesus [?]

This young man's comments bespeak the continuation of a struggle to undo the legacy of white privilege and ideologies of white supremacy wrapped in Christian-centrism. This Christian-centrism subsumes Judaism ". . .under its doctrinal premises. . ." and rejects other cultures, religions, and ways of life as ". . .incompatible with Christianity."[65]

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64 *Save the Thai Temple* Press Release, November 7, 2008.

65 Choan-Seng Song, Asia. John F. A. Sawyer, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture* (Malden, MA:

Abbot Tahn Manas, who has lived at the Berkeley Thai Temple for 24 years, makes it clear that the food service is a religious activity because it is a means of merit-making, which is central to Theravada Buddhist practice. "Our Sunday activity is pretty much like Christians going to church every Sunday," says Abbot Manas. "Without it, it would be very difficult for us to continue merit-making."[66] Thai American youth *act* Thai in their efforts to save their temple because they express *bun khun*. *Bun khun* is akin to the Chinese-Confucian virtue of *xiao* 孝, filial piety, the belief that one possesses an obligation and indebtedness to one's parents. In the vernacular it is known as the "milk-debt." Thai males are expected to be ordained as novice monks as a means of ensuring merit for their parents. While daughters are unable to become nuns in Thailand, they are expected to care for their parents in their old age. In America, both sons and daughters repay their milk-debt by fulfilling the virtues of *bun khun*. They become caregivers of their parents' and grandparents' lifeways, and defenders of the American virtue of religious tolerance.

Conclusion

Shortly after the Berkeley Thai Temple community conflict was settled, controversy erupted around the expansion of an existing Hindu temple in the nearby City of Livermore, southeast of Berkeley.[67] Similar to other conflicts, residents in Livermore cited traffic, noise, and parking in opposition to the expansion of a Hindu temple. The Shiva Vishnu Temple community had proposed a plan to expand its 63,000-square-foot temple. "But temple officials said they scaled the project down after multiple meetings with neighbors who expressed concern about the noise, odor, parking, dust, and traffic. Addressing the neighbors' concerns has added an additional $5 million to construction costs . . . ."[68] This was followed by a national debate about the rights of Muslim Americans to build a mosque and community center near ground zero.[69] Critics dubbed the project a "monster mosque" and argued that it is part of the agenda to Islamicize America.[70] Conservative political and religious leaders all joined the national debate, insisting that Muslim Americans are insulting America by building their mosque at Ground Zero (despite its being two blocks away). Moreover, they reiterated that America was a Christian country. The anti-mosque sentiment was so strong, that President Obama had to dial back ". . . saying that he supported the Muslim community's right to build the mosque, but was not sure it was a good idea to build so close to Ground Zero."[71]

The forces that opposed the establishment of Asian religious sacred sites on American soil that unfolded in Berkeley, Fremont, Livermore, New York, and other communities across the United States reveal a dominant ideology of Judeo-Christian-centrism and white supremacy. Singh rightly notes:

> As the country continues to diversify racially and religiously in the coming years, it remains clear that the issues of racial and religious bigotry towards minority religions — in a nation

Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 159.

66 Geoffrey A. Flower, Brunch as a Religious Experience Is Disturbing Berkeley's Karma.

67 *Sunita Sohrabji, Livermore City Council to Decide on Temple Expansion. India West (April 23, 2010).*

68 Ibid.

69 Margot Adler, Developer: Plans for N.Y. Mosque Moving Forward. National Public Radio (May 5, 2011).

70 Andrea Peyser, Mosque Madness at Ground Zero. *New York Post* (May 13, 2010).

71 Reshma Kirpalani, "Ground Zero Mosque" Clears Legal Hurdle to Build. *abcNews/u.s.* (July 13, 2011) http://abcnews.go.com/US/ground-mosque-wins-legal-battle-build/story?id=14062701 (last accessed September 9, 2011).

in which Christianity is the dominant, unofficial state religion — will continue to be a sore spot in non-Christian communities of color across the nation. In order to avoid increasingly rancorous conflict in the coming years, the centuries of Judeo-Christian tradition, morality, and dominance must allow space for the culturally distinct religions that accompany the increasingly racially diverse population of the United States. In addition, members of the dominant community must join with their fellow non-white Americans to battle the vicious combination of white and Christian supremacy which has plagued our nation since its birth.[72]

The community conflicts are not only about temple building in itself — not merely about buildings or spaces — but rather, reveals the contours and politics within social relations that are configured by racial and religious hierarchies underwritten by white privilege and ideologies of white supremacy. Religious freedom, therefore, is not just about the free expression of Asian religious traditions, or about any non-Judaic-Christian traditions in the United States, but rather, it is a continual battle to exert the right to be fully American.



Berkeley Thai Temple Sunday brunch tradition continues, September 25, 2011

(Photo by Jonathan H. X. Lee)

[72] Singh, 104.

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Challenges Sri Lankan Monks Face in Disseminating Dhamma to Children in the US.

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Sri Lankan monks who come to the United States as religious workers are knowledgeable of Dhamma & the language of the liturgy. They also usually have years of experience in teaching Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha) to children back home. But they need more knowledge & skills such as English proficiency and the knowledge about the socio-cultural environment, to perform as efficient Dhamma teachers in the U.S. In this paper, I talk about the challenges Sri Lankan monks face in disseminating Dhamma to children of immigrant Sri Lankans in the US, and how I, as a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk - teaching children from ages 4-15 years old, choose the criteria to make the teachings meaningful and effective for my students.

This paper is based on empirical data of my own and my interviews with several colleagues who have been teaching Dhamma to first generation of immigrant Sri Lankans in the US. After a short summary of the historical background as relevant to the subject that I am going to cover, I will discuss the challenges that a Buddhist monk faces when he becomes a Dhamma teacher to children as a resident Buddhist monk at a temple started by Sri Lankans in the US.

The role of a Buddhist monk as a missionary

Historically, the role of Buddhist monks as educators of the nation was justified by Sri Lankan Buddhists by the reference that they make to the textual evidence found in Pali[1] (Carathabhikkhave cārikaṃ bahujana hitāya bahujana sukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ).The Buddha's advice to his first group of ordained disciples who attained enlightenment was to go forth and disseminate his teachings for the benefit of the many. From the days of the Buddha himself, the Dhamma dissemination was also supported by the monks who were not enlightened, yet who taught after learning it as an academic exercise[2]. It is this ancient tradition of sharing Dhamma that Buddhist monks still carry out as one of their noble tasks.

Buddhist monks as educators of the nation

After the advent of Buddhism in Sri Lanka the role of monks as educators was maintained until colonization. During the Buddhist revival period, one of the first goals was to restore the traditional role of Buddhist monks as educators by establishing Sunday schools to teach Dhamma to children. After the independence, the Buddhists slowly regained their control over Buddhist

1 Mahāvagga Pāli, Mārakathā
2 Saṃyutta Nikāyo, Khandhadaṃyutta, Thera Vagga # 7 Khemaka Sutta

education. Current model of monastic education evolved with the support of both western and eastern models of education.

Sunday Dhamma Schools in post-colonial Sri Lanka

As much as 95% of Sri Lanka's Sinhala Buddhist children attend Dhamma schools. These are held on Sundays from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon or 1:30 PM, and schools may have from 100 to 5,000 students who range in age from 4 to 16 or a little older. Almost every temple conducts a Dhamma school, and therefore exceeds the number of regular schools in the island.

State support for Sunday schools is funneled through the local councils set forth for the protection of Buddha Sāsana. Although most Dhamma teachers are monks, schools may also have male and female lay teachers who have obtained their teaching certificates. To ensure uniformity of education provided in all schools, the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs sets the syllabus for each class level. The syllabus provides an understanding of the Buddha as the most enlightened person, and a very comprehensive coverage of the ritualistic and philosophical aspects of the religion. The ministry also provides guidebooks for teachers, conducts training and conferences for teachers, and provides textbooks and school uniforms for students free of charge. The government, local governments, and district secretariats supply furniture and other equipment for the schools.

All dhamma school teachers are volunteers. Most are former students who have successfully passed the final examination of the Dhamma School. These young teachers usually teach at least for a few years until they have to leave the area for further education or employment outside the area. The government provides them with some incentives such as free bus passes and allocating extra points when they apply for regular government jobs. Besides all this support, the government discourages the Sunday morning tutoring classes for other subjects in regular primary& secondary school curricula.

Thus, the Dhamma schools are actively supported by the government and they also benefit from the government's general educational policies. Since Religion is a compulsory subject for all students[3]until the completion of high school education Buddhist students must take Buddhism as a subject. As a result, the Dhamma school teaching is often reinforced by the regular schools and vice versa. In their homes, children usually participate in daily rituals and may regularly chant a sutta or two with their parents, or more often with grandparents. Adults often draw from the teachings to praise children, or to discipline them. As a result, for most Dhamma school students, religion is very much a part of their daily life.

Parents, other professionals, well-wishers, and philanthropists also render an immeasurable service to help monks to succeed in teaching the students. However, it is the monks who play the lead role by taking the responsibility of organization, coordination, and administration of Dhamma school activities besides teaching Dhamma at local and national level. Thus, by teaching in Dhamma schools, young monks gain a lot of experiences in many areas in their carrier development. Despite such enriched teaching skills, when they travel abroad as religious workers, the monks are totally deprived of their well-established support system, and are required to work without no prior warning or training in a new environment.

[3] This rule applies to Buddhism as well as other faiths that students may adhere.

Disseminating the Dhamma to children in the US

Information provided in this section, mainly comes from my own experiences as a Buddhist monk/teacher in the US. From my numerous conversations with, and observations of colleagues from Sri Lanka who work in the US, I can confidently say that the facts presented are quite representative of the experience of majority of Sri Lankan monks who conduct Dhamma classes for children growing up in the US.

Sri Lankan monks usually get an opportunity to go abroad to live in a temple and work as a religious worker only if they are famous or have contacts with the abbots of a temple overseas, or by invitation coming through a line of contacts of lay people who open a community temple in another country. There is no standard preparatory training course or orientation for Buddhist monks who go to teach Buddhism overseas. Recently, an individual institution, the Sri Lankan International Buddhist Academy started to offer some training in this regard. This attempt is however still prevails at initial stages. Most monks who go to other countries may be boarding a flight for the first time, and are qualified to conduct religious ceremonies and give Dhamma talks in their native language only, to an audience of Theravada Buddhists.

When I arrived in California six years ago, such was my own background. Regardless of this fact, the temple's membership had enormous expectations that I would soon teach their children some of the commonly known chants and rituals, and that I would impart the Dhamma to them along with Sinhala language. So even before I had a chance to recover from jet lag, I was expected to organize classes. But as I met the children, I knew that many of my qualifications to teach them were now null & void.

Most children growing up in the US do not understand or speak the native language at all, which creates a communication barrier. They speak English only, and that too very fast, and with an American accent that I have had very limited exposure towards before coming here. So, among the children I was supposed to teach, it was as if I, with limited English language skills, became deaf and dumb, and thus completely lost the opportunity to establish a meaningful relationship with them at the very first meeting, which is much important to establish good future relationships. I felt particularly helpless because though the lay community talks with each other and their children in English most of the time, they would not speak in English with me despite my requests to do so. It was that clear they did not feel comfortable in speaking to monks in English. Perhaps this was because there is no way to translate the formal speech they use when talking to monks, and they considered it was unethical to use the more casual speech patterns in English when talking to monks.

I started going to ESL classes in an adult school for a year, and then registered for the same at a community college. This is the usual path for all Sri Lankan monks to learn English, but our progress is very slow because other students in class also do not speak English fluently, and we do not get many opportunities to speak in English outside of class. It took me a couple of years to barely manage to communicate with the children. As a result, during the first two years, a few temple members helped me out by teaching the classes while I switched my role back to "a novice monk", administering only pancasīla (five precepts) to the students!

As I gained more confidence to speak in English, I took some classroom activities and also attempted to present sermons in English to improve my ability in the language. But that did not

work out also because some adults requested me to speak in the native language, depriving me of that golden opportunity for me to learn English faster and to serve their children. While I am fully aware that I speak far more effectively in Sinhala, by doing so I neglected the children in the audience. This created a great deal of uneasiness in my mind, but it seemed that we become immune to the problems, resulting in a decrease in the pride we have in our capability to serve everyone, whatever their age and gender.

Now, after six years of ESL classes, and increasing interaction with non-Sinhala speakers who visit our temple, whom I meet at other temples and communities, I am able to teach the children myself. Still however, despite my considerable experience as a teacher, the process has not been easy.

Apart from not having a syllabus suitable for children growing up here, there are also no text books, teacher's guides and other educational materials and even all the necessary equipment for classes. So, when community members visit Sri Lanka, I requested them to bring suitable books in English if they find any. I also try to use books published by other Buddhist sects here, download teaching material from Buddhist Websites (such as Buddhanet.net) and go online and check what other Dhamma Schools do. But my temple, similar to many other Sri Lankan temples, is housed in a small residence and there is not enough room to keep too many educational material and equipment even if we had them. We don't have proper classrooms either. Being the only resident monk in the temple, I do not have a support system to consult about various matters and must talk with senior monks in other temples who are more experienced in teaching when I encounter problems. I usually have 12-15 students in a class, ranging in age from 4 years to about 15 years. The fact that I am often the only teacher means all of them must be taught together, which obviously becomes problematic to both teacher and the students.

While the lack of books, equipment, and the support structure present considerable challenges, the biggest challenge in teaching is to learn about the society and culture, which is foreign to me, and in which these students grew up. They are not used to temple etiquette such as dressing in simple clothing when they come to the temple, removing shoes, kneeling down to bow to the Buddha, and sitting on the floor. They do not know that monks have a different status in the community. Their homes and regular schools are equipped with modern equipment, and in their neighborhoods children are exposed to modern electronic gadgets and games, and sometimes even to drugs and gangs. Most children growing up in the US do not know the daily Buddhist rituals that people back in Sri Lanka perform. Many parents are professionals working in academic or technical fields who are often too pressed for time to perform them. The children are also not familiar with the many periodic rituals and ceremonies that are unique to Sri Lankan culture, and in my class, I have some non Sri Lankan students, too. Majority of parents expect that their children to be taught everything that parents themselves learn during their time at Dhamma School in Sri Lanka.

Other big challenges I face come from parents. Unlike in Sri Lanka, classes here are held for only one and half to two hours once a week or once every fortnight, and the children come mostly because they are compelled by parents than out of their own desire to learn. Regardless of all of the above shortcomings, most parents expect me to teach their children the usual rituals and chanting, a fair amount of Dhamma, and even the Sinhala language in a relatively short period of time. But some parents do not bring their children regularly because they as well as the children give priority to other activities such as homework, birthday parties, and sport practices. So, to teach students who do not come to class regularly, in a setting with very limited time and facilities, often

with no volunteers, and without much reinforcement of what is taught at homes because parents are so busy and there are no grandparents to play the traditional role of teaching their grandkids, is an enormous challenge.

The tools I use in delivering Dhamma to my students

Next I shall now share some facts about how I select which aspects of the Dhamma to teach a group of students from different cultures and with different levels of understanding. But I will not talk about the rituals and chanting that I also teach; I feel these topics require separate papers themselves.

I believe that if somebody is well grounded in his or her understanding of good and bad, skillful and unskillful thoughts, words, and actions (kusala and akusala,) cause and effect (kamma and vipāka) and the middle path (majjhimā paṭipadā) that are core values of Buddhism, that they can be harmless to themselves and others and survive unharmed in any society. Therefore, the best approach was to try to emphasize the humanity of the Buddha, and to show the children how to apply the teachings to improve their daily lives.

Since I wanted to emphasize the humanity of the Buddha, I do not relate stories about miraculous events that are said to have occurred in the Buddha's life and that of his disciples, such as Prince Siddhartha walking seven steps on lotuses and making a great proclamation just after birth, and setting his begging bowl against the current of the Neranjarā river to test whether he would become enlightened on the night[4] that he sat under the Bodhi tree, and the story about Sīvalī's mother bearing him in the womb for 7 years 7 months an 7 days[5]. I do not think these stories are going to make a positive contribution to the children's moral development. I use the limited class time to impart to them aspects of the Buddha's life and the Dhamma to help to prevent themselves from getting into trouble and to develop into good adults and citizens who are beneficial to themselves and others. So, let me now show how did I try to instill some of the core values that the Buddha encouraged us to develop, such as humanness, determination, patience, kindness, and compassion in my students, using Jātaka stories that are said to depict the Buddha's former lives, Suttas that convey the teachings, and events from the lives of the Buddha and his disciples.

Anything is achievable

I think one of the most important lessons to be learned in Buddhism comes from the Buddha's early life, when he was still Prince Siddhartha. Prince Siddhartha taught us humans could achieve anything when there is determination, sacrifice, and diligence. He was born, raised, and passed away as a human being, but raised himself to the Buddhahood without any external help from super natural powers. I use his renunciation from his princely life to demonstrate to the children the courage and determination with which he worked towards attaining his goal of finding the truth about our existence. Maybe the fear of Samsara or the urgency to protect his son and others drove him to leave his wife and day-old son and the kingdom that would one day be his, but whatever it was, it could

[4] Buddhavansa Aṭṭhakatha, Nidhānakathā

[5] Udāna Pāli, Mucalindavagga, Suppavāsāsutta

not have been easy to leave the palace where he was assured of all comforts and pleasures. But he sacrificed all that to achieve his goal. I also talk about his six years of searching for the truth to show how he never veered from his goal even when teachers he met in the forests admired his intellect which surpassed that of all other students, and offered him the leadership of the group, but how he courageously turned down those offers and went forward to find what he was looking for. I talk about how he left the five ascetics, the only people he could turn to for help and protection while he practiced severe austerity, because he realized that truth could not be found if he stayed with them .So with these and other incidents in Buddha's own life, I encourage my students to have a clear goal, and to be courageous and diligent in their efforts to achieve their goals.

Age does not matter

To show them that even youngsters like them can achieve their goals, I talk about the lives of the Buddha's disciples too. For instance, I tell them how young novice Rāhula faced the intelligence test so cleverly that he qualified for higher ordination at the age of seven.[6] Other stories I use are that of Mahaushada[7] and his friends who organized a well-equipped stadium, and the story of Sopāka, a destitute child who was put in the cemetery by his own father to be eaten by wild beasts, and who, after he was rescued by the Buddha, went on to develop his mind to become an Arahant. I also tell the children that if they develop their minds, they can even teach the parents too by telling them the Sujāta Jātaka, in which a son was able to make the father understand that lamenting for his dead wife was useless[8]. To sum up then, using stories like these I discuss with children the importance of making goals, laying a foundation for achieving them, and the fact that age is no barrier if they have the determination to succeed.

Virtues add more values

To teach the core values of Buddhism such as the four sublime states of kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (Mettā, Karunā, Mudita, Upekkhā,) I again use examples from the life of the Buddha and remind children that one does not have to be a grownup to practice the teachings. For example, to instill kindness and compassion in these youngsters, I talk about how precious life is to all living creatures and not just humans. Then I draw on stories such as the one when young Prince Siddhartha saved the life of a swan that his cousin, Devadatta, shot by arguing with him and other playmates that now the swan belongs to him. And I relate to them the story of how the Buddha nursed a monk named Putigatta Tissa[9] who was sick. This monk was seriously ill with wounds oozing with pus all over the body, and other monks did not want to go near him. When the Buddha saw him, Putigatta Tissa was almost dead. But the Buddha was so compassionate that he washed the sick monk with his own hands and nursed him back to health.

In these lessons I also show that if we develop kindness and compassion, we help our own selves. Prince Sāma's story shows how he protected his blind parents in a thick forest by

[6] Khuddaka Pāṭha Aṭṭhakatha, Kumārapañha Vaṇṇanā, Aṭṭhuppatti
[7] Jātakaṭṭha Kathā, Mahā Ummagga Jātaka, #538
[8] Jakaṭṭhakathā, Sujāta Jātaka #347
[9] Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Cittavagga # 6 Kathā

being friendly to animals there, which in turn helped him with friendly support and protection.[10] The Buddha preached that anyone who follows his teaching could enjoy happiness here and now and this is just one story that helps to demonstrate that to the children.

Generosity is another Buddhist value that I try to instill in the students. For this the story of Arahant Sīvalī, who received the four requisites even more than the Buddha at times because he practiced generosity in his past lives, is very useful to encourage my students to share candies, toys, books and crayons with brothers, sisters and friends. They say this is something they could follow.

Practicality of the teaching

To make the teachings extremely relevant to their daily lives, we talk about feelings like anger and jealousy, and about bad behavior, and the rewards that could follow if they develop good qualities and behavior. There are many Jātaka stories I use to illustrate these points. In Tilamuṭṭhi Jātaka a misbehaving prince is spanked, and after reflecting on his punishment goes on to develop better behavior and ultimately becomes the king of that country[11]. In Ghaṭīkāra Sutta, Jotipāla forcibly takes his friend Ghaṭīkāra to visit the Buddha, which turns out to be enormously beneficial for the spiritual development of the latter.[12]Serivānija Jātaka[13] and the Kāliyakkhinī story are very helpful to teach children about the repercussions of anger.

Patience, one of the ten perfections (dasapāramitā) that have to be cultivated for attaining Buddhahood, is a quality that helps us to lead peaceful lives. To teach students about the positive results of being patient, I draw on the life of the Arahant Sāriputta[14]. One day the Arahant was walking on a lane with his begging bowl in his hand when a man came behind him and hit him hard on the back to test whether Sāriputta was really patient, as it was popularly believed. When he was hit, the Arahant fell on the ground and his begging bowl rolled away. Sāriputta stood up, took the bowl back and continued on his path without getting angry with the man. Seeing this injustice the people started to run after the rough man to beat him up. But, Sāriputta had perfected the quality of compassion: he gave the man his bowl to carry it to the temple and thus protected him being beaten. Stories such as these inspire the children to develop core Buddhist values such as patience and compassion which helps these students in their daily interactions with class mates and other people.

Associates are influential to others' lives

Another important aspect of the Dhamma that I bring to class is that of making good friends. This is particularly important in the US, where children are influenced greatly by TV characters and other media, and where children are subjected to more intense peer pressure than in Sri Lanka. So, it is important to show them how friends they make affect their lives, and the importance of being vigilant when choosing friends. I see children getting a positive message from the stories of

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[10] Jātakaṭṭakathā, Sāmajataka, # 532 Kathā

[11] Jatakaṭṭakathā, Tilamutthijataka # 251, Kathā

[12] Majjhima Nikāya, Rāja Vagga Ghatikara Sutta, # 1

[13] Jātakaṭṭhakathā, Serivānija Jataka #03, Kathā

[14] Udāna Pāli, Mucalindavagga, Suppavāsā Sutta

Devadatta and Ajāsatta. Because of Devadatta, a bad friend in the guise of a monk, Ajāsatta, who had the fortune to become an Arahant, not only killed his own father, but also helped Devadatta – who unsuccessfully tried to kill the Buddha.[15] In the Satthigumba Jātaka[16], two birds living in one nest were separated because of a strong wind. One ended up speaking good kind words, and the other speaking bad words, because of the people they had to associate with. Through Mahilāmukha Jātaka children learn about the impact of good and bad words even on animals.[17] Angulimāla, who was a smart student, became a criminal because of wrong advice given by his own teacher who did it out of hidden hate, until he met the Buddha, and went on to become an Arahant. Viyaggapajja Sutta[18]teaches about good and bad friends and their patterns of behaviors. I use this to teach students critical thinking skills, while from Mangala Sutta[19] they learn that having good friends is one of the good fortunes in this life because they will not go astray.

I also again draw attention on to the Buddha's life to show how good friends helped the Buddha to achieve Enlightenment. For instance, when he was a prince and went out with Channa[20], his charioteer, and saw the real conditions of human existence – that we all grow old, get sick, and that we all die – Channa did not try to protect him by saying the prince will not be subject to those conditions. Instead he said, "Oh, yes my lord, not only that person, you, me and everyone subject to old age, sickness, and death". Had Channa done otherwise, the prince may not have gone in search of the truth, but lived in great dissatisfaction. And I also show my students how the Buddha himself was a good friend to many. For instance, if the Buddha had sent back Rāhula, his own son, when Rāhula[21] came to him asking for the inheritance, or Prince Nanda[22], who was about to get married to Janapada Kalyāṇī, without giving them the benefit of his great discoveries, they would not have attained the bliss of Nirvana.

The nature is the reality

Talking about Prince Siddhartha and Channa leads to discussions about old age, decay, illness, and death that are universal human experiences. To illustrate the first three points, I remind the children that the Buddha himself was subject to these conditions and that once, when he was old and tired, the Buddha compared himself to an old cart mended with ropes and creepers.[23] I tell them that Mahākassapa Thera passed away suffering from old age and sickness. Once, Angulimāla Thera came back to the vihāra after begging for alms with a wounded body with the rocks thrown at him by street boys.[24] Moggallāna Thera was beaten by the thieves until they thought he had passed away.[25] To show that death is universal, I also talk about Kisāgotamī, who had the good luck to realize Dhamma from the Buddha, had so much grief that she lost her senses and was unable to

[15] Cullavagga Pāli, Sanghabhedakakkhanda
[16] Jatakatthakatha, Satthigumba Jātaka # 495, Kathā
[17] Jātakaṭṭhakathā, Mahilamukha Jataka # 26, Kathā
[18] Anguttara Nikaya, Gotami Vagga # 4 sutta
[19] Suttanipāta, Cūla Vagga # 4 sutta
[20] Buddhavansa Aṭṭhakathā, Gotama Buddhavaṇṇana
[21] Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Yamakavagga, #9 Kathā
[22] Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Yamakavagga, # 9 Kathā
[23] Dīgha Nikāya, Mahaparinibbāna Sutta
[24] Majjhama Nikāya, Rāja Vagga, Angulimāla Sutta
[25] Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Daṇḍavagga, # 7 Katha

even understand or believe her child was dead. Patācārā, who was destined to become an Arahant, had to bear the deaths of those nearest and dearest to her.

If this is the nature of every one's life, what can we do? I tell them we need to do well, behave well, cultivate "kusala" (positive energy,) and develop morality while we are in good health, and from childhood before any accident interferes with the progress of life. I remind them that everyone longs for, and delights in happiness, but that happiness earned from cultivating "kusala" is the happiness that is most precious, and that lasts the longest, unlike the happiness we get from material things.

But, I also remind them that change is the nature of life, and happiness can turn to sadness in a moment. So I also teach them about the importance of developing equanimity so they are not shaken by the *Atthalokadhammās*, the eight vicissitudes. As the Buddha pointed out, these are also universal human experiences and we need to know how to cope with them.

Are we friendly to us?

What I mostly try to do is to show the children that they need to love themselves and be kind to themselves as well as others because if they love themselves, they would make themselves happy and healthy both bodily and mentally and have a bright future. So, we talk about proper nourishment, chronic deceases like obesity and diabetes and the importance of physical exercise, and the importance of avoiding junk foods. We talk about how we should avoid bad words and behaviors, and about studying well for a bright future. They need to see that parents and teachers can only help them that they cannot study or eat well for us. Then I advise them to try spread the same love they have to themselves to others, the way the Buddha did to Rāhula, as well as to Nālagiri[26]– the elephant which was set to kill him. I encourage them to do Mettā meditation so they develop love and kindness towards themselves as well as others, and cultivate an environment that enables them to live peaceful, happy lives.

Balanced mind

Other issues that I talk about in the US that is actually quite new to me, and which students experience daily, are ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity; competition for and addiction to electronic gadgets that cause social tension and restlessness; availability of guns leading to unnecessary deaths and more violence; gang warfare; teenage pregnancy; teen driving accidents; drug addiction. To raise their awareness about these issues, I teach about critical thinking, maintaining open and balanced outlooks, mindfulness, and courageous efforts of working towards their goals without being distracted or tempted by wrong friends and influences. Fortunately Sri Lankan students that I have met have managed to avoid most of the above social ills because of parental supervision. So, I show them that to have parents with them should be considered a great blessing to the children of the family; the Buddha said that the "Mother and father are Buddhas living at home." And we talk about parent-child relationships and duties of parents and children towards one another, as well as other social relations and duties between other groups of people, as taught in the Singālovāda

[26] Cullavagga Pali, Sanghabhedakakkhandaka

Sutta.[27] Parābhava Sutta[28] shows how to achieve happiness and success in life. VasalaSutta[29] talks about the importance of treating parents well. In Mātuposaka Jātaka the future Buddha (bodhisatva) almost sacrificed his life to save his sinking mother in the middle of the sea.[30] At the annual Sri Lankan New Year celebrations, we ask the children to bow down to their parents to show them respect, and to receive their blessings.

To be blessed

Talking about parents, I attempt to teach students another core value in our tradition, gratitude towards parents, teachers, and anybody who loves us and cares for us. I remind them that it is only because parents spend so much time, money, and energy on them, and because they love them and show compassion that they have a good life. We talk about how our parents sacrifice their own happiness and health, to give the children what they want and about how they spend sleepless nights when the children are sick, how they spend their wealth on food, clothing, toys, school facilities, medicine and even on taking them on picnics. When we discuss these qualities in our parents, even the misbehaving children become calm and quiet and reflect on their parents and the children themselves suggest the chores they can do to help the parents like keeping their room, clothes, toys, and study places neat & tidy, by helping with gardening, and being generous, etc.

In the US, children are regularly exposed to people of different ethnicities, faiths, and cultures. To help children see the value of having differences and to teach them to respect other cultures, I use our natural environment as a teaching tool. I put them the questions such as "What would it be like if we see the same kind of trees, fruits, birds, animals, everywhere in the world? Would that not be extremely boring, and would the world also be boring if we did not have diversity among human beings?" But it is necessary for us to have mutual understanding, and respect to each other for the happiness of everyone and I remind them that in the Buddha's time, India was culturally and religiously diverse as the US is today, and that the Buddha used to visit every other religious group and cultivate friendly relationships through respectful interactions. I tell the children how lucky they are to be able to visit other religious places and mingle with different people.

When we talk about religious diversity, the students have many questions. When does the Buddhist Santa Claus visit children? Who is the Buddhist God, or is the Buddha a God? Who is lady with a conch in her hand in a middle of a pond? Why do other priests wear gray and black robes? Why do some Buddha statues have so many hands? Why does he have a big belly in others? These questions really challenge Sri Lankan monks because we have not been exposed to other Buddhist sects in Sri Lanka. While studying, Sri Lankan monks gain a sound theoretical knowledge about Hinduism and Jainism through the various texts, but they are seldom exposed to the Mahayana tradition that depict the Buddha in the above manners. The majority of Sri Lankan Buddhist monks have also not interacted with foreign student monks who live in Colombo and suburbs. Thus I need to learn about those traditions to answer the children's questions.

[27] Dīghanikāya, Pāṭika Vagga # 6 Sutta
[28] Suttanipāta, Uraga Vagga # 4 Sutta
[29] Sutta Nipata, Uraga Vagga, # 7 Sutta
[30] Jatakaṭṭhakathā, Matuposaka Jātaka # 448, kathā

Be proud being a part of your culture

Chanting in Pali, and culture related rituals are an integral part of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. All Vandanā Gāthas, (devotional verses) and blessing chanting are in Pāli. As we did in the past with our grandparents at home, and with the teachers at the temple these children also learn to chant with us. To make it easier to them I select easy, short, rhythmic ones and one for each day. I print the verse in a fairly big Romanized-letters, and give each one a copy even to the ones who do not read yet. Instructions are given to them as to look at the paper attentively while I chant the verse four or five times loudly, slowly and nicely, and then invite them to repeat after me line by line. Sometimes I do the same line three four times if it is necessary. Then I explain the meaning in simpler language and practice the difficult words separately. Then everyone together chant the same verse three or four times to challenge them to memorize as many lines as they could. At the end I can find at least one who can memorize the whole verse, or some who can do one or two lines. When the days' work is over, I do practice the same verse with them again a few more times and ask them to practice and memorize it at home so that they can chant it when they come next day to Dhamma School. Interestingly, I get at least a couple of students who are able to chant over the phone before the next meeting. Gradually I take up much harder ones too. But I don't see they find that much difficulty in memorizing. If the children get a chance to practice at home with elders they could do it smoothly. Within about one and half years regular students feel comfortable to join the Vandana chanting with others in regular ceremonies. This is the only section of education in Sri Lanka that we use here without much change, and it gives enormous results, especially with younger ones. During Dhamma School I teach them how to prepare Pūjas, bring the Pūjas to altar and gently and respectfully and also, to bow down after offering Pūjas and before leaving the temple. During our general ceremonies I encourage the children to help elders to prepare Pūjas and bring them to the altar. I see the enthusiasm in children to do these in front of others. Even at home religious ceremonies, which I am a member of, I always urge the elders to let children to apply as much as they can what they have already learnt in the class. In all ceremonies I want to see children sitting in the front row. In this way parents and I make our children interested in our chanting and rituals.

While I convey the Dhamma successfully in the ways shown, I am unable to impart knowledge about important cultural practices woven around the Buddha's teachings, such as the practice of hosting Dansal – free distribution of food and drink to commemorate Buddha's birth, death, and enlightenment on the full moon day in the month of May; the commemoration activities to show respect to Arahant Mahinda who brought the message of the Buddha to Sri Lanka on the full moon day in the month of June; and the Kandy perahera – the elaborate cultural pageant to respect tooth relic of the Buddha and some Devas. But I hope that with the knowledge they have gained in my Dhamma classes, that they will be able appreciate these meaningfully whenever they visit Sri Lanka.

Summary

Finally, my temple does not have enough suitable text books and equipment, or the required surrounding to teach our children the way I really wish to. The language barrier between us limits my ability to bring all the benefits of the Buddha's teachings to the children. But I try, with the limited resources and class time I have, to meet the parents' expectations to impart the message of

the Buddha to their children as best as I could, and to instill some valued aspects of the Sri Lankan culture in them that I believe contribute to their development. I am glad to say that I see some progress in the behaviors and attitude among the Dhamma School participants. Now they are able to participate in most of the Pūjas (rituals) more meaningfully and to chant some of the stanzas, and pay due respect to all religions and the priest irrespective of their denominations. Some of them also play a vital role in some of the temple activities, performing Jātaka stories, singing devotional songs in Pāli and Sinhala. A few students are not yet comfortable enough to participate in these activities, but I hope they will gain sufficient confidence in time to come.

Bridging Society and Buddhism Through a Woman's Role in Teaching the Dhamma as Depicted in Selected Visual Art Works from Sri Lanka

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Introduction:

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the women's role in teaching the Dhamma and how it can bridge society and Buddhism. To study this phenomenon, I have selected some Sri Lankan Buddhist visual art works from Gampola and Kandy periods (18th and 19th centuries).

Art works provide a reflection of the powerful role women can play in teaching the Dhamma in society. A woman plays the roles of mother, wife, daughter, sister, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law etc. There is ample evidence to show how a woman has assisted the Bodhisatta and the Buddha to achieve Enlightenment. Among them Prajapathi Gotami, the foster mother of prince Siddharta, his wife Yasodhara and Madri, the wife of king Vessantara sacrificed their lives for a son or husband.

In ancient and modern society, a woman teaches counselling, advices and looks after family and conjugal affinities. These activities and roles are depicted in Buddhist visual images in ancient Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka. These visual images appear to have used as a method for the teaching and learning of Dhamma.

In general, a number of media can be used for teaching the Dhamma. Among these, I suggest visual art works as the most effective option for teaching and learning the Dhamma for the welfare of society. Even though in education, visual aids are generally used as a teaching and learning material, I have selected some visual art works such as paintings, sculptures and carvings as teaching and learning aid of Dhamma.

Most Sri Lankan Buddhist temples use the aforementioned art works to communicate a religious sentiment rather than aesthetic pleasure. Also, these visual images help to remind the devotee that the location at which he is present is a religious one[1]. For instance, the theme of images depicted generally represent the *jataka stories* (Buddha's previous birth stories) , *Mara yuddhaya* (Mara's battle) *Satsatiya* (seven week) etc. Actually, these art works do not manifest the wide range of the technique of visual arts such as perspective, composition colour texture and so on.

1 A visual object or experience consciously created through an expression or imagination (Britanica,Vol.1. 139p).

In my opinion, visual art works in Buddhist temples can be used as a teaching and learning material in the teaching of the Dhamma. The purpose was not to create visual deception but to send a message to the audience. The art works I have selected in this paper can be used as a tool to express the teachings of Dhamma as well as to encourage the use of imagination in the study of the Buddha's doctrine. At the same time, these Buddhist images help the devotee or the onlooker to be aware of spiritual realities.

Moreover, it is important that the visual images not only provoke religious sentiment but also become educational. For instance, if the devotee wishes to follow the Buddha's doctrine, he can read the traditional Buddhist texts. This is also a material that can teach the Dhamma without the help of visual images because the devotee can read the text and understand what it says. However, paintings, sculptures and carvings convey the same message more quickly to an audience because it is the nature of visual aids. In addition, anyone can read the visual images without language ability and irrespective of cultural orientation. Thus, even uneducated laymen can follow or realise the Buddha's doctrine through the images without any difficulty.

The selected visual images teach the devotees the relationship of Buddhism and human rights, Buddhism and culture, society, gender and stimuli for studying the Dhamma. Moreover, visual images have a higher tendency towards representing emotion. The Buddhist temple paintings, sculptures and carving create emotional stimulation and they enrich our understanding of the Dhamma.

Buddhist paintings, sculpture and carvings show clearly the path of a woman's religiosity and female authorship that can bridge society and Buddhism. Furthermore, it reveals a woman's contribution in both the religious and secular realms and her sentiment and sacrifice to change Buddhist society and culture.

Discussion

As a mother, wife, daughter and sister, a woman's smile or tears etc build a meaningful society. She constantly teaches her children, husband and brother etc the meaning of loving kindness, happiness, peacefulness and patience and so on. According to Damma, the woman as a mother holds an honourable position in society. The mother would always extend her loving kindness (*Metta*) to all living beings. She encourages her husband's and children's happiness by disciplining and counselling them. She is usually the first teacher of her children who teaches morality through the Five Precepts. She advices her young children of the disadvantages of killing, stealing, lying, drinking intoxicants and sexual misconduct. When preaching to the lay Buddhist people, the Buddha preached the five advantages of morality. This lesson is first taught by the mother to her young children.

According to the Buddha's preaching, layman relationships include that between husband and wife, and parents and children. The many suttas of *Tripitaka, Dhammapada* also refer to these intimate relationships, and we can identify the role of mother through of this suttas. However, the intimate relationship between the mother and child begins when the mother is pregnant with the child. In ancient Hindu culture as well as in modern Sinhala Buddhist culture, the pregnant mother can be seen near her time of delivery visiting her parents, particularly her mother. The culture in both the ancient and modern Sri Lankan culture is similar. The expecting mother wishes for her mother's

love and encouragement before delivery. This shows a mother's powerful role to build up the human society. The best example of this can be seen in a painting at *Suriyagoda Rajamaha Vihara*. Queen Maha Maya go to her parents' palace to deliver her baby Prince Siddharta.

However, some visual images represent a close relationship between the mother and child. The example of *culadhammapala Jataka* at *Satkanduru Rajamaha Vihara* in Kandy district, Sri Lnaka. This Jataka story represents the relationship between the mother and child as well as a misunderstanding between the husband and wife[2]. This story teaches the mother's love for her child and the jealousy of her husband for his baby and wife. According to the story, this mother looks after her seven month old son by bathing, feeding and dressing him in rich cloths and playing with him. This is the duty of a mother in society. When the King sees this, he suddenly gets angry with the wife. He could not understand the close relationship between the mother and son.

He thought "*Even now woman is filled with pride on account of her boy and does not value me straw, as the boy grows up, she will think ,I have a man for my son, and will take know notice of me. I will have him put to death at once*". (Vol iii. 118P).

The dialogue shows the mother's love and the narrow-mindedness of the husband. However, this story explains her son's death and her husband's cruelty. First, the king orders the executioner to cut off the baby's hands. At the time she said to the king:

"*The great king my boy is only a child, seven months old. He knows nothing. The fault is not his. If there be any fault, it is mine. Therefore did my hands to be cut off*".(Vol iii. 118P).

She says the fault is her's not her baby's. This statement shows a mother's affection for her baby and a mother's sound understanding of her baby. When the baby's hands are cut off, they fall on to the mother's lap. Second, the king ordered to cut off the baby's feet, and third, to cut off his head which also fell on the mother's lap. The mother without losing hope, says: "I will wager and support my son, give him to me"(Vol iii. 119P). When the king ordered to cut her baby's hands, feet and head, she offered instead her hands, feet and head.

[2] A king being jealous of his queen's affection for her child has the boy mutilated and killed, and is punished by being cast into hell (Jataka stories, Vol.iii, 117p)

In the Jataka text, any literate Buddhist follower will have to spend a considerable amount of time reading the story as it unfolds. In the sculpture I found at the *Sathkanduru Raja maha Vihara,* however, the climax of the depiction is as follows:



Figure 1: Picture of Dhammapala Jataka at Sathkanduru Rajamaha Vihara

This visual image depicts the human figures of the king, the queen, the prince and the Executioner. This sculpture shows the king ordering to cut off the baby's head, hands and feet. The mother lies down on her son's fallen hands and feet with blood and she weeps. The theme of the story is simplified in the image. When a devotee reads this image, he can at once understand the values of the Buddhist Doctrine such as non-aggressiveness, rationality, practicability, efficacy and universality. If the king understood the close relationship between mother and child, he would not have done what he had done. And the image reminds that no one has the power to destroy another person. This doctrine represents the universal truth. The father of the family or husband should look after his children and wife with loving kindness. The queen understood the mistake and that her husband is someone who does not understand her relationship with her child. She repeats the following stanza:

" no friendly counsellors advise the

'slay not the heir that from thy loins did spring'

No loving kindness urge the tender plea

'slay not the boy that owes his life to thee (Vol iii. 119P).

What is the lesson this sculpture teaches us? In my opinion, it can teach that the man is not always capable of understanding the intimacy between the mother and the child and that the woman through her suffering has been able to teach (or at least tried to teach) her husband of the value of the relationship between the mother and the child. This is a fundamental relationship emphasized in the Dhamma. All people in any society should be able to develop their morals emotionally and psychologically. And all people should improve the close mutual relationship between inner personal peace and outer social peace. Then everybody can develop the four 'diving abidings' - loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), joy at the happiness of the other (*mudita)*, and equanimity (*upekkha*).



Figure 2: Chattapani Jataka, at Satkan Duru Raja Maha Vihara



Figure 3: Chattapani Jataka at Satkanduru Raja Maha Vihara

There is another sculpture at Dimbulagala temple in the Polonnaruwa district. It depicts the *Ekapada jataka*. This sculpture was not made in ancient times but in the 20th century. It represents a father who listens to his son. According to the jataka story the boy asked a philosophical question and the father thought not everyone can answer his son's question and that he should ask from the Bodhisatta.

The composition of the image shows that the family is in front of the Bodhisatta asking him the question. It represents the father, mother and their children (sister and brother) as a united family. If it is a peaceful family, the family has a one common problem, not individual problems and they visit the Bodhisatta as a family, not individually. The image manifests the mother's happy facial expression and it appears that she at once has consented to her husband's decision to consult the Bodhisatta. Furthermore, her willingness reveals how she encourages her children as well to learn the Dhamma.

There is another Jataka story in the paintings at the Degaldoruwa raja maha vihara in kandy district. This story tells us that women liked to follow the Buddha's doctrine of morals by listening to him preach. According to the story all of them were beautiful female musicians. One day they performed for his majesty in the park. The ascetic of *Khantivadi* also sat down in this park. The king slept on the lap of a beautiful woman, then all women thought that their king was sleeping and the performance was not necessary for him and they went to listen to the preaching of the Dhamma.

The king awaked with anger and he asked from the Bodhisatta "*what doctrine are you preaching*" Bodhisatta said "*The doctrine of patience your majestic*". (Vol.III, 27p). Finally, the king needed to judge the Bodhisatta's patience then the king cut off the Bodhisatta's hands, feet, nose, and ears etc. But the Bodhisatta didn't get angry with him. However, the women realized the value of patience and if anyone lives without patience, all people should suffer as a result of his negativity.

However, if we consider about the institution of family, the wife plays a powerful role in interacting with her husband and children. The wife's loving mind not only relates to all sentimental living beings with the welfare of the world in mind but also includes the natural fauna and flora of the environment. If the wife lives with a loving mind at her home she will be able to destroy harmful influences. Furthermore, she cannot feel fear, terror, hesitation and there is no grief of suffering in her home. This phenomenon is depicted through visual images at the Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka. A woman called *Madri* depicted at the *Vessantara jatala* at Degaldoruwa Temple is the example of the best woman.



Figure 4: Vessantara Jataka at Degaldoruwa Raja Maha Vihara

According to the jatakas, the Bodhisatta was the king *Vessantara* and his wife was Madri. The background of the story explains that the king *Vessantara* had to give his white elephant to the neighbouring country. Then the community got angry with him and finally, the Bodhisatta decided to go to the *Vangagiriya* (rocky forest). Although all the citizens got angry with him, his wife didn't abandon her husband. When the Bodhisatta gave up family life, she also accompanied him and her two children. She lived in a separate chamber with her children and Bodhisatta lived in another chamber in *Vangagiriya*. She always thought about her husband's ascetic life and she helped him to get more involved in the religious life not only in the present life but in future lives as well.

One day she went to the forest for the purpose of gathering food for her family. When she returned home she didn't see her children. This, generally, is a difficult situation for any mother to face and gets impatient for her children. Madri also faced in this situation and she was weeping and asked for her children from her husband. This is again depicted at the Degaldoruwa temple.

She teaches us a good lesson - she sacrificed her love for her children for the sake of the Bodhisatta's Buddhahood. And she teaches to the women of the world how they can maintain mental balance, flexibility and spiritual life through sacrificing her own life. Also, gives a message to us of the achievement of a way of life through *sila* (ethical conduct), *Samadhi* (concentration) *panna* (wisdom). She informs us that the wife is the best friend of her husband and how the wife understands her husband irrespective of his changing mind.

The Buddha mentioned the code of discipline that should be followed by a wife in the *sin-galowada sutta* of *Diganikatya.* It mentions the five ways as follows:

- by doing her work well (susamvihita kammata)
- by hospitability to both her husband's relations and other associates.(sangahita parijana).
- by faithfulness (abnatikarini)
- by protecting what he earns (sambhatam anurakkata)
- by skill and diligence all her duties (dakkha ca analasa sabbhakiccesu).

These Five show the responsibilities of a wife in the Buddhist society, and the role of Madri gives the best example through the practically of following these five ways. She always devotes herself to her husband because she went to the forest with his husband for a religious life. She came from a royal family but she gave up her luxuries for her husband and she managed her family when they were living in the forest.

Furthermore, some visual images in Buddhist temples show a woman in disparaging terms. The *sattubhasta jataka* depicted at Degaldoruwa is a good example. Some images of this painting series show the destruction of the female mentality in the ancient and modern society. If somebody reads this painting which is located in the image house of the temple, he would not misunderstand these women and would rather think about her mentality in philosophical terms and with rationality. According to the story, the wife is very young and the husband is old. (Vol.iii, 210).

In family life, age difference between husband and wife can also create problems. Sometimes the wife cannot understand her husband's conjugal affinities and they cannot build a close relationship. If the wife finds another young person to have intercourse, it destroys the family

and impacts the children. Such a situation teaches us the human mentality. They are not living with happiness and peacefulness. The wife doesn't need to build her family life continuously and reveals feminine mentality of unsatisfied intercourse.   And she doesn't like to sacrifice her duties towards her husband. This can be understood in this dialogue: "*I cannot do the work of your house get me a maid"* (Vol. III, 211p).

If we compare of the attitude of Madri and this woman, it clearly reveals the wife's different feeling to her husband's mental construction as well as its destruction. In my opinion, the visual images of this kind of jataka stories reveal how the woman develops society using her flexibility, love, kindness and understanding of others.

The carving as a visual image represents a woman's role in society in Ambakka Vihara in Kandy district. There are many wood carvings in this temple which depict natural as well as mythical animals and birds, human figures, flower s, vegetative formations, inorganic elements etc. Female human figures represent the daily life of women. The theme of some carvings stimulate Buddhist religious sentiments and location. The figure of a 'woman feeding child expresses the loving kind sentiment and the close relationship between mother and child. As the result of the mother's love, the baby presents good reaction and sense to his mother and the society.

Conclusion

The above mentioned fact proves the visual images such as paintings, sculptures and carvings are useful media for teaching and learning Dhamma in ancient and modern society. Furthermore, a woman's contribution presents a powerful communicative method to build a meaningful society anywhere in the world. And the selected visual images reveal that a woman can develop the four 'diving abidings' - loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), joy at the happiness of the other (*mudita)*, and equanimity (*upekkha*) to build society.

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Dharma in Action: The Gift of Western Female Dharma Teachers

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Western female dharma teachers[2] hold a particular ability to cultivate presence and mindfulness[3] as a result of their unique life experiences. This paper follows examples from the lives of two first generation Western Buddhist nuns. These two women, Bhiksuni Thubten Chodron and Venerable Ayya Khema represent the embodiment of dharma in action[4]. They are capable of this as a result of both their life experiences as the obstacles they face as female monastics in the West. Their life experiences and the insight they gained from them also provides a context to the dharma that makes it relatable to followers in the West. Western female lay teachers also, exhibit a sense of equanimity in their teaching by using new and innovative methods that make the dharma relevant for Westerners, as well as in the compassion they convey to their students in doing so. Their experience and expanded perspective spanning several continents has allowed them to develop a presence to the dharma that they might otherwise not have gained. It is the cultivation of presence and equanimity that will bring fluidity to the dharma within the ever changing social climates of the 21st century. By contrast, the community of Buddhist & feminist scholars has provided a typically Western response to combating the institutionalized oppression of women by examining doctrine to find misogyny and restructuring classic interpretations for a more balanced view of gender.[5] Academia requires that we take a position; we divide ideas and concepts in order to prove a point. It does not often require that we be present and non-dualistic.

Before exploring the feminine embodiment of the dharma in action, it is important to examine what occurs within a dualistic perception of doctrine. Effects of a dualistic viewpoint have proven particularly divisive between the doctrines of Ancient Indian[6] and Mahayana Buddhism.

[1] I am a Westerner and a female, raised Catholic, and a new observer to Buddhist doctrine and philosophy. My understanding of the dharma is largely experiential. Having little formal Buddhist education and not having spent my any part of my life in a Buddhist culture or in a Buddhist household in which particular doctrine is enforced has provided me a certain freedom to encounter the Buddha's teachings as they pertain to my personal experiences. I have spent years of informal Buddhist education and meditative practice without specific reference to doctrine. After years of internalizing what I believed to be the Buddha's teachings through meditative practice, I recently sought out formal instruction through classroom education and reading commentary on Buddhism and sacred texts. The terminology that I use, due to my unique perception and experiences, will not be exclusive to one school or doctrine.

[2] The term, western female dharma teachers, as it is used, encapsulates both female monastics and female lay teachers. The term western female dharma practitioners will be used to describe female practitioners who focus primarily on meditative practice and, in some instances, less on traditional religious training.

[3] Mindfulness is synonymous with presence, equanimity, and meditation in Zen Buddhism. Mindfulness occurs through meditation. Meditation is the process of looking deeply into the heart of things. Therefore, meditation, in this sense, does not refer to the commonly understood physical practice of sitting with the eyes closed and therefore can be practiced during any physical activity. The use of a Zen text does not implicate judgment by the author that the other schools of Buddhism do not have congruent ideologies. Nhat Hanh, Thich, True Love: A Practice for Awakening the Heart (Shambala Publications 2006) pg. 3& 50.

[4] The term dharma in action, as it is used, essentially, is another term for presence. 'Action', in this sense, does not mean physical or phonetic activity, but rather, the still activity of being, cultivated within one's heart, which innately fosters a naturally inclusive and loving, outward environmental relationship that results from mindfulness.

[5] Gross, R. Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) pg.3

[6] Ancient Indian Buddhism in this context is not to be interpreted as identical to today's Theravada Buddhism in ideological beliefs. Gross, R.M., Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993)

The beginnings of Mahayana Buddhism are often disputed, but we know that much of Mahayana doctrine suggests a strong resistance to ancient Indian Buddhist doctrine[7]. A highly polemic Mahayana response to ancient Indian Buddhism began to incorporate the use of women. Mainly in mystical form, these women were not of flesh, but rather, fictitious characters that were used allegorically to prove ideological beliefs. Female figures began appearing in certain Mahayana doctrines as powerful and enlightened teachers. Not only were the female protagonists often young, uneducated, and not ordained, they came in stark contrast to their ancient Indian Buddhist counterparts who acted as their unenlightened, unwise, and unworthy opposition. In some cases, these monks were even depictions of famous monks of Indian Buddhism.[8] The Mahayana believed that their new insight into doctrine "unfolded the manifestation of the Buddha's original message, making manifest what had not been made clear"[9] by ancient Indian Buddhism in orthodox doctrine. The effects of this were two-fold.

First, the doctrines were written in a way that naturally determined a division between the groups as they implicate the Mahayana's desire to have entirely new and separate teachings from the older forms of Buddhism. Secondly, this led to widened dissent among the groups, fostering defensive relations and attitudes toward one another, resulting in further division among them. This also created a fight for power and avoidance, and by definition, broadened the spectrum of duality rather than minimizing it. This is one example of the way in which dualistic viewpoints work to divide relationship. This leads to the conclusion that relying on doctrine or academic text to validate or determine the true meaning of the Buddha's teachings can be problematic. In this case, not only because the contributions of Buddhism's women today dismantle the value of such contention, but because the text, from whichever doctrine is used, will more than likely be considered the true and full message of the Buddha[10] by only a percentage of the Buddhist community and the breadth of influence may be minimized significantly. In the same way, the Buddhist feminist then runs the risk of being influential to an even smaller proportion. And furthermore, the use of doctrine as it pertains to Western Buddhist feminism is particularly problematic in terms of creating a balanced or restored view of "the feminine" in Buddhism, because it relies on textual evidence that is naturally unbalanced in a dualistic state.

To further complicate matters, feminism, utilized alone, finds relevance only in doctrinal interpretations as they relate to women. For even feminism requires that every situation be viewed through a particular lens and with a particular filter. While many scholars lean also on their Buddhist and scholastic training for well-rounded interpretations[11], the doctrine, ultimately, is still examined for logical relevance and presented in an intellectual context. While it should be noted that the confluence of feminism and Buddhism has produced several generations of women who looked to Buddhism with a genuine spiritual appetite, openness, and inspiration to lead,[12] overall, it is in one's ability to cultivate presence to themselves and to the Buddha's teachings that has the potential

[7] Refer to anti-Hinayana* rhetoric. Gross, R.M., Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) pg.55

[8] This example is used by the Rita Gross to point out the shift in doctrinal teaching, as it pertains to the perception of the feminine, from Ancient Indian to Mahayana Buddhism. It is not necessarily intended to pinpoint the effects of the dissent among the schools.(Gross, R.M., Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 57-58

[9] Gross, R.M., Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) pg. 56

[10] Gross, R. Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) pg. 56

[11] Gross, R. Buddhism after Patriarchy (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) pg.5

[12] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg. 279. Endotes pg. 312

to leave the longest lasting and far-reaching effect in the West and to bring them fluidity within the ever-changing global religious climate. It seems that the more we begin to divide or compartmentalize ideas and concepts, particularly with regard to Buddhist teaching, whether it is doctrinal or academic, the greater the risk of Buddhism as a whole being caught within the confines of Western academic consciousness. Buddhist academia also runs the risk of blending in with other Western religious discourse. Therefore, academia cannot raise the collective consciousness of the western world as it can only perpetuate division already innate within a largely individualistic society.

If utilized as the primary method of transferring Buddhist values and principles to the West, then the true value of the dharma, the innate messages of the Buddha's teaching, can easily become moot in the translation. While academia is certainly good and can introduce the dharma to Westerners unable or unwilling to experience the fullness of the dharma through practice, as Western culture is already highly intellectualized, Buddhist practices must be taught and implemented in order to bring presence and integrity to the dharma in the West where spiritual practice and transformation are not deeply engrained in the common culture. This makes Western female dharma teachers particularly valuable to the livelihood of Buddhism in the West, making it fresh within a newly expanding Western religious milieu. As mentioned above, this paper will examine the ways in which two Western women: Bhiksuni Thubton Chodron and Venerable Ayya Khema, represent the dharma in action. First, we will examine the unique circumstances that led them to the cultivation of the dharma within themselves.

Buddhist women in the West exhibit a new and unorthodox set of requirements in terms of what is to be gained from Buddhist practice. Often, they are in search of a genuine internal balance and liberation, sometimes stemming from experiences of suffering and uncertainty, sometimes with the desire for a deeper sense of environmental liberation from the familial and societal pressures that women often face in the Western culture[13]. While it may be easy to believe that contemporary Western Buddhist women bring with them a great deal of life experience that has undeniably influenced the course of Buddhism's integration into Western religious culture, being a Buddhist nun in Western culture carries with it a unique set of challenges. These are compounded by the fact that monastic women, in particular, are faced with the two-sided coin of discrimination in a Western world that does not always necessarily understand or appreciate them. The result of this is two-fold for some teachers. The reality of this can prompt feelings of insecurity and become a cause of discomfort for Western nuns. In short, in the Western world, nuns are consistently required to be present to their emotions and reactions, denying them the luxury of cultivating their internal liberation at a later date.

Bhiksuni Thubten Chodron is a Western nun who lives within this tension. As a monastic nun, she does not have the luxury of blending in with her environment. Although not always the case, she often faces stigmatization and condemnation by westerners who do not agree or understand her lifestyle. She could choose to view this backlash as an invitation for responding with righteous anger, or at least harboring it. Instead, she chooses to recognize the value in these uncomfortable experiences in that they not only hold her accountable for her emotions, but that they require her to look within herself to cultivate her own liberation from the insecurities that arise.[14] Her choice to be mindful of her emotions is self-evident of her devotion to dharma in action. The benefits of

[13] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg. 314

[14] Chodrun,Bhiksu Thubten, Buddhist Women on the Edge, article: You're Becoming a What? Living as a Western Buddhist Nun (Berkeley Ca, North Atlantic Books 1996) pg. 231, 232

monasticism itself as a whole, particularly female monasticism are also questioned in the West and provide another opportunity for Western female monastics to deepen their practice.

Being a Buddhist monastic in the West, where disillusionment from monasticism is widely prevalent, Western female teachers are often judged as "conservative and traditional" both qualities maligned by Western egalitarian social codes. Monasticism is often viewed in the West as hierarchal and repressive in nature. Thubten Chodron has encountered the effects of this social ideology first hand. For example, monastic women are often judged as being afraid of the emotional challenges of intimacy, avoiding the topic altogether by becoming a nun, and therefore, are sexually repressed. Westerners who think that monastics are lazy and who question the value of meditation over the consumer values of the West, often label monastics simply as resource consumers that do not give back to society.[15] This affected Thubten Chodron personally when the difficulty of having lived as a foreigner in Asia for many years created in her a genuine desire to be at home in Western dharma circles. Upon her return to the states, however, she found that she was sometimes marginalized for being part of, what many Westerners believe, is an oppressive and overtly patriarchal system. Nevertheless, she views this as a prime opportunity to deepen her practice:

> I have had to reexamine my reasons for being a monastic, she says. The reasons remain valid and the monastic lifestyle definitely benefits me. It has become clear to me that my discomfort from the judgment was due to my attachment to other's acceptance to which, part of my practice is to subdue such attachment.[16]

Again, while she could view these struggles as a reason to disrobe, instead she uses them as a way to strengthen her practice of self-meditation, allowing her to remain steadfast in her lifestyle choice and leading her to develop a deeper sense of presence and equanimity. Resulting from these circumstances, she further recognizes that some people think that the monastic model is overemphasized in Asia; but she still recognizes the need to resist swinging to the other extreme by presenting only a lay version of Buddhism to the West. She notes, "Because people have different dispositions and tendencies, all lifestyles must be accepted in the panorama of practitioners.[17] From this example, her evolution of consciousness and insight are made evident. Her decision to be present to her own responses, when faced with this stigmatism, reflects not only her commitment to her own development but to the dharma itself. These situations require Western nuns in particular, to be present to their internal dialogue requiring them again and again to reflect upon the teachings from a place of presence and equanimity.

Living in the West where upholding certain precepts can also present a challenge, nuns from certain traditions carefully study the Venaya to discover the Buddha's purposes for creating each precept in order to find the true message that the Buddha was teaching. This requires the nuns again to meditate deeply on the messages within the precepts as they do not have the option of following them to the letter. They do this to experience how the dharma is active in the context of their own lives. Chodron explains how this has affected her personally:

[15] Chodrun,Bhiksu Thubten, Buddhist Women on the Edge, article: You're Becoming a What? Living as a Western Buddhist Nun (Berkeley Ca, North Atlantic Books 1996) pg.231

[16] Chodrun,Bhiksu Thubten, Buddhist Women on the Edge, article: You're Becoming a What? Living as a Western Buddhist Nun (Berkeley Ca, North Atlantic Books 1996) pg.232

[17] Chodrun,Bhiksu Thubten, Buddhist Women on the Edge, article: You're Becoming a What? Living as a Western Buddhist Nun (Berkeley Ca, North Atlantic Books 1996) pg.232

> If we followed the precept [that nuns cannot ride in a vehicle] literally, it would be very difficult to go to receive or give teachings. The Buddha's concern in creating this precept was for nuns to avoid causing suffering to others or cultivating arrogance. We adapt this precept by not riding in expensive vehicles and to avoid becoming proud if someone drives us in one.[18]

This reflection provides validity and context for the world of the Western monastic woman, cultivating and inherent sense of equanimity and allowing her to see the value of the Western lifestyle as it pertains to Buddhism as a whole as well as the universal nature of the Buddha's teachings. This allows her to be more accepting and present to the needs of differing social structures like those of other Buddhist countries and the West. She demonstrates this when she goes on to explain that, whereas interpretations of these precepts vary by individual and tradition, "we need to be tolerant of these differences and use them to motivate us to reflect on the precepts more deeply".[19] Not unlike Bhiksuni Thubten Chodron who was ordained in the Tibetan tradition, Venerable Ayya Khema, ordained a Theravada nun, cultivated presence as a result of her challenging and diverse experiences both as a Western woman and nun.

Before her passing in 1997, Ayya Khema was ordained nun at the age of 55. By that time in her life, she had been a mother, a grandmother, and former wife. She had lived a comfortable and sheltered life as a child, she had been both wealthy and poor as an adult, and in the course of a few years, she had traveled through South America, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Kashmir, and Hunza. Her devotion to the dharma in action was evidenced in her unfailing willingness to leave the leniency of attachment to the external world behind, in favor of the dharma, bringing her life-long search for inner liberation, full circle.[20] Highly diversified life experiences and copious traveling are particular to Western Buddhist nun because typically, Asian nuns are ordained at young and malleable ages with very little life experience and their relationship to the dharma is limited to the structural ideology of one school.[21] Ayya Khema's experiences and reflection made the dharma real for her even before she became a nun. Her experience of the dharma at that time was largely experiential and cultivated, and so was not something unattainable or limited to the study of one discipline of doctrine, of which she had little knowledge, but something found innate within herself and her experiences.

Therefore, like Bhiksuni Thubten Chodron, this gave her the opportunity to develop a presence to the teachings as they pertained to her life, that would ultimately lead her to the knowledge that the dharma was not only within her, but found also within the discipline of doctrinal study and practice. This indicates the balance and the depth of her full circle journey. Through this, she realized that the dharma she experienced within her was a reflection of the truths held within the sacred texts, but may have never discovered this if she had not had the opportunity to discover the dharma within herself first. This is why her experience of the dharma was so important; it led her to choose Buddhism on her own accord because she recognized the teachings as inherent within her, making sense of their inner personal experiences. This made her devotion to the dharma that much

[18] Chodrun, Bhiksu Thubten, Women's Buddhism/Buddhism's Women, article: Western Buddhist Nuns: A New Phenomenon in an Ancient Tradition (Somervile, MA: Wisdom Publications 2000) pg. 87

[19] Chodrun, Bhiksu Thubten, Women's Buddhism/Buddhism's Women, article: Western Buddhist Nuns: A New Phenomenon in an Ancient Tradition (Somervile, MA: Wisdom Publications 2000) pg. 87

[20] Khema, Ayya , I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 3

[21] Chodrun, Bhiksu Thubten, Women's Buddhism/Buddhism's Women, article: Western Buddhist Nuns: A New Phenomenon in an Ancient Tradition (Somervile, MA: Wisdom Publications 2000) pg. 81

deeper and profound. As all Western nuns become ordained by choice, including Bhikksuni Thubten Codron, this is another gift of the Western female nun both to her students and to the flourishing of the dharma in the West. By the time she was ordained, she had already discovered that the "world could not bring one inner peace and inner happiness, because everything that happens in the world is impermanent".[22] With this it was clear that her final journey in life was to be the journey within herself. The opportunity for these diverse life experiences and challenges, created a resulting insight and thus, a particular advantage to the Western female nun as they provide added opportunity to develop presence, equanimity and impermanence. One such experience occurred during the time of her worldly travels, when she was together with her husband and son, living in their caravan Jeep. They had decided to park and stay one night in the Automobile Club in Calcutta. Upon spotting a man on the corner selling oranges, she, still named Ilse at the time because she had yet many years to go before she would be ordained, gave her son 5 rupees and instructed him to buy a bag from the man on the street. When he left and never returned, Ilse and her husband went into panic:

> Maybe Jeff had misunderstood me and gone to the market…In Calcutta; we had the additional worry that children here were kidnapped and then: trained as beggars and made to live as part of beggar families. In any case, we were terribly frightened.[23]

Just as the motorcyclists from the automobile club were set to comb the streets for Ilse's missing boy, Jeff re-appeared nonchalant carrying the bag of oranges his mother had instructed him to buy. In frenzy, both Ilse and her husband Gerd jumped all over Jeffrey. They pleaded with him for the answers to his tardiness. He innocently explained to them that as he was buying oranges, a man with a cow came by. The man would milk the cow on the street and then sell the freshly drawn pitcher of milk to the woman of the house. Jeff explained to them how he tagged along, helping the man tend the cow, eventually milking the cow himself and selling the pitchers of milk to the housewives. And that, in the four hours that this had gone on, he never once noticed the time.[24] Upon seeing Jeffrey's freedom and security, Ilse decided that it was time that she resolved to:

> Do away with the constant pursuit of the child in my thoughts as well as my ongoing fear for his life. Because these things made it impossible to take joy in this life….I wanted to get rid of this constant state of fetter…I loved my children and still do, but my attachment and fear could only have a negative effect on my love. My children do not belong to me, they belong to themselves. I am not their keeper. We are linked to each other but not bound to each other-that is a huge difference.[25]

By this example, we can see how her uncertainty and fear, brought with it, presence and clarity to Ilse as well. Her pain and diverse experiences helped her gain a sense of impermanence and resulting equanimity. These types of fearful situations were not uncommon for Ayya Khema in her early life. As a Jewish child in war-torn Germany, she experienced consistent uncertainty, which developed in her a desire to keep looking for the answer to internal peace. When her parents were forced to

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[22] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 146

[23] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 115

[24] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 115

[25] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 116

leave her behind in Germany, in order to escape, she accompanied them to the train station to see them off, but harbored an immense fear and pain at the loss of them:

> Hardly had my mother reached her compartment [of the train] when she fainted. I stood outside; my father waved at the window. I would have loved to have fainted myself, I was so afraid being left alone in Berlin…There was still a few friends left. But there was also fear-what would happen if the Nazi's came to get me? ...Every day, I felt this fear more strongly.[26]

As Hitler's regime began its take-over in Germany, well before; then Ilse, would be left on her own, the Nazis instituted the Jewish poll tax. Since her family was extremely well-to-do, her father's earned fortune was extracted almost entirely:

> I went with my father to the ministry of finance office; as he left the room, he broke into tears. That was the first time I ever saw my father cry. At that moment my sense of security was shattered once and for all. From then on, I knew that the world was not safe and secure.[27]

With this statement, the full circle of her awareness is made clear. From a childhood riddled with immense struggle, to the realization of her freedom from almost paralyzing fear, she recalls the developing consciousness that linked the two together:

> Today, I see that my past has led me onto this path. My experiences made it possible for me to let go of a great deal of personal fear, fear for my own life and fear for my fellow human beings. I have seen that it is possible to deal with any situation in life, whether it is in the Amazon basin or the thin air of Hunza. You can get through anything if you just go with the flow of events.[28]

It is certain that these struggles; her pain and suffering, planted also the seed for the cultivation of her internal freedom and presence, serving as convincing evidence that she was at a distinct advantage as a result of having had them. Thus, she held a distinct advantage for gaining presence and through her experiences as a Westerner, making her a valuable and relatable teacher in the Western world. The compilation of events that led her to seek out her inner journey, culminated in her full mindfulness of her fear, bringing her to a state of equanimity and non-attachment to the external world:

> I was 55 years old and I had seen the world…What does the world still have to offer me? The moment had come to say goodbye to the world…But we cannot withdraw entirely from the world. As long as we have a body, we have to talk; we have to have contact with people. When you teach, the students who come to you bring the world with them. By saying goodbye to the world, I only mean entering into a new phase in which you experience the world as an observer, not as one who continues to be drawn into its passions.[29]

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[26] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 14

[27] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 13

[28] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 149

[29] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 148

She both teaches and confirms here that her compassion and clarity were also cultivated within the presence of equanimity and non-attachment as she goes on to state,

> The observer has a lot of sympathy and love for the people around him, but he no longer permits himself to become entangled in their feelings and destinies."[30] There is a beautiful word: compassion. At the beginning, one has empathy for those who have passions. But the goal of Buddhist teaching is to get rid of these passions. Teachers try to communicate this to their students, and in teaching they themselves learn it ever more deeply. Only if in teaching you experience yourself as still learning can you have what people call authority. Only if that is the case do you touch people's hearts.[31]

What Ayya Khema teaches us at the culmination of her story is that ultimately, the prerequisite for helping others is that one must first cultivate presence; mindfulness and compassion for themselves, in order to cultivate a loving presence to the other.[32] And with this, in the present communication from teacher to student, the love of the dharma transforms not only the heart of the student, but the teacher as well, serving as an awakening, an invitation, sparking a deeper and deeper cultivation of the dharma inherent within each of them, revealing the universality of the dharma. This is what is meant by dharma in action.

For both women, their ability to assimilate their life experiences with the doctrine and discipline of monastic life is a reflection of their mindfulness and internal balance. Ayya Khema noted:

> [Students] have to feel that this teacher who talks so cleverly has been through learning himself, and has accomplished something I can emulate; this person does not talk like a book, but from the heart.[33]

Here, the value of the dharma in action, or in other words, presence, when teaching the dharma is made clear as well as the value of both Thubten Chodron and Ayya Khema as they manifest the dharma in action as a result of their life experiences both as Western women and nuns. This is why the cultivation of presence is so essential to the flourishing of the dharma in the West; because it makes the dharma inherently relatable, carrying with it the love and fluidity of the Buddha's teachings that is naturally present within the loving exchange between people who are grounded and present to themselves and each other. In this way, it is effortless and natural, and is therefore not bound by new and ever changing social and cultural constructs. This relatability between teacher and student makes the dharma a part of the human experience, something attainable by students rather than something only cultivated and practiced by monastics. This, in itself, brings fluidity to the dharma in the West and beyond that, in that it can potnetially be realized and upheld by all sentient beings. However, the structure of Asian monastic and lay communities will not translate relatable to Western culture. Therefore, the development of the dharma in the West will rely heavily on experiential practice. Additionally then, the formal monastic training and study of the nuns is necessary in providing

[30] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 148

[31] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 148

[32] To love, in the context of Buddhism, is to be there. This is cultivated by one bringing their true presence to the here and now, often developed with meditative practice. Nhat Hanh, Thich, True Love: A Practice for Awakening the Heart (Shambala Publications 2006) pg. 5&6

[33] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 148

a grounding and integrity to the teachings in the West where they are new, and where spiritual development is not heavily engrained into family, community, or cultural expectations.

Their experiences, their presence, and formal training both in the East and the West, naturally provided them a unique balance and comprehensive understanding of the dharma allowing them to be powerful role models and leaders for others nuns, and making them valuable in the formation and development of a functioning Western sangha. Thubten Chodron's founding of Sravasti Abbey, for example, addresses the need for monastic gender equality in order for Buddhism to survive in the West by incorporating the value that men and women train side by side as equals. She also utilizes Western technology such as audio and video recordings for easy access to her dharma talks.[34] She emphasizes the practical application of Buddha's teachings in daily life and is especially skilled at explaining them in ways easily understood and practiced by Westerners, and is well-known for her warm, humorous, and lucid teachings.[35] Ayya Khema developed the Buddha-Haus in Allagu, Germany where she lived and held seminars and retreats for hundreds of people in her time there leading up to her death in 1997. Some of her retreats were also held at the St. Albert Dominican monastery, much to her delight, as she had the intention of developing ecumenical dialogue and encouraging the awareness that presence is available within all traditions.[36] This again demonstrates her presence and equanimity which again, undoubtedly helped provide context and a pathway for the acceptance and validation of Buddhist practice within Western spiritual traditions.

She also wrote 25 books during her life time that are written for both Pali, German, and English speaking students as to serve her desire for the dharma to be spread to as many people as possible.[37] Ayya Khema was one of three women chosen by H.H. The Dalai Lama in 1987 to form the first conference of the Sakyadhita, now also the International Association of Buddhist Women, which did and still does work as a Buddhist women's support network, also encouraging gender equality and leadership among Buddhist women both lay and monastic. Among many other tasks, Sakyadhita helps women become fully ordained Bhikksunis in both the Theravada and Tibetan traditions, they help nuns develop leadership roles within their sangha, and help to alleviate struggles and promote the health and well-being of nuns living in poverty worldwide.[38]

In their experiences and challenges, they are given an almost inherent gift, being Western nuns, for strengthening their inward practice and presence which is apparent and culminates in the manifestation of programs and teachings that blend both Eastern and Western ideologies, valuing the contributions of both equally, and cultivating a balance and equanimity that allows each to support the purpose of the other. Undoubtedly, their challenges and rewards are experienced by

[34] Chodron, T. (n.d.). *http://www.sravastiabbey.org/index.html*. Retrieved Feb 4, 2012, from Sravasti Abbey: A Buddhist Monastic Community: http://www.sravastiabbey.org/index.html- Thubten Chodron was also a resident teacher as Amithaba Buddhist Center in Singapore, she studied three years at Dorje Pamo Monastery in France,and was a teaher at Dharma Friendship Foundation in Seattle, WA. for 10 years.

[35] Chodron, B. T. (n.d.). *Biography*. Retrieved Feb 4, 2012, from Venerable Thubten Chodron's Home Page: http://www.thubtenchodron.org/Biography/index.html

[36] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg.189

[37] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 192

[38] Khema, Ayya, I Give you My Life: The Autobiography of a Western Nun (Boston & London: Shambala Publications 1998) pg. 181- Sakydhita provides a plethora of other contributions to Buddhist women, both lay and monastic that are not named here. Refer to: Women's Buddhism/Buddhism's Women, article: Wurst, R., Sakyadhita in Western Europe: A Personal Perspective(Somervile, MA: Wisdom Publications 2000) pg. 100

many monastic women in the West. Thubten Chodron describes her challenges; not limiting them only to her, but as challenges common for Western nuns in general.[39] As Ayya Khema cultivated freedom and an internal awareness of the dharma well before she was ordained a nun, her story in particular serves as evidence that mindfulness and subsequently, an internal cultivation of the dharma is available through experience and reflection. Therefore, one's ability to cultivate the dharma within their own heart and to be transformed by it is not exclusive and transcends the practice and ideological parameters of any one doctrine, school, or social structure. This reveals the dharma to be a universal truth and therefore, reflective of a larger fundamental human potential. For this reason it is understandable that Buddhist practice is becoming more desired, relevant, and applicable to Western culture and why it was inevitable that the dharma spread throughout the West in the first place. As we have seen with the presence and training of Western monastics like Venerable Thubten Chodron and Venerable Ayya Khema, this also means that the Buddha's teachings hold true even as they merge with new lands and new ideologies. Therefore, new and changing, culturally relevant expressions of active dharma, the cultivation of this potential, non-exclusive and superseding the boundaries of preconceived notions, ideologies, and widely differing cultural environments; is not so much an evolution or a dismantling of the Buddha's teachings, but another expression of them; an acceptance of the Buddha's teachings; an intrinsic expression of them, giving proof of the fundamental truth of their universality and ability to transcend divisions and cultural boundaries with compassion and love. It is this that enables the dharma congruency and practicality in the Western world.

Western female lay practitioners are also good at supporting Buddhism's permeation into the West. Like female monastic teachers, their perspective spanning both Eastern and Western ideologies and social codes, accompanied by experiences that are typical to secularly focused cultures like those of many western countries; provide western female lay practitioners the insight that allows them to be compassionate to the non-traditional expectations of the Western religious milieu. As Buddhism begins to move into secular settings in the West, many western students are coming to Buddhism for reasons other than to form a religious path. In fact, Buddhism in the West is frequently not practiced as a religion and many Westerners who engage in Buddhist practices are not Buddhist converts.[40] Although most lay dharma practitioners are trained in the teachings of one tradition or sub-school[41], secularly focused meditative practices are often more relevant to the lifestyles and needs of western students. While not religiously focused, the balance of this teaching is found in their ability to be compassionate to the needs of their students and to merge both experiential and pragmatic methods into their teaching styles.

Their compassion and understanding, along with their ability to adjust traditional teaching methods in order to focus on the innovative, experiential and pragmatic methods that are the most relevant and desired by western students is an external reflection of their internal balance, compassion, and dedication to the dharma. The culmination of these factors allows the integration of the dharma into western culture. And, while male lay teachers too can certainly understand the needs and desires of western students, for western students who are seeking ways in which to apply Buddhist principles

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[39] Chodrun, Bhiksu Thubten, Women's Buddhism/Buddhism's Women, article: Western Buddhist Nuns: A New Phenomenon in an Ancient Tradition (Somervile, MA: Wisdom Publications 2000) pg. 81-87

[40] Wallace A., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: The Spectrum of Buddhist Practice in the West. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg. 35

[41] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg. 278&279

pragmatically through Buddhist meditative practices into their daily lives, lay female dharma teachers seem to be better able to relate to students, "because women tend to teach more on practical levels and put less emphasis on traditional and dogmatic aspects of the teachings."[42] This in fact, works to the advantage of these western students because the dharma is as a result, largely expressed physically and through the senses. Students are therefore given the opportunity to recognize the dharma as it permeates through their own experiences. This makes the dharma attainable and relatable for these western students to cultivate in their daily lives and not only a set of unreachable and esoteric concepts.

Because meditative practice is physical and experiential, and concentrates on the development of mindfulness, the focus of the teaching of the lay female dharma practitioner also becomes primarily communicative and inward focused. Mindfulness falls then on emotions and internal responses to the practice, again, allowing for an active and experiential context to the teaching, helping new Western students to become mindful of their emotions, rather than again, externalizing the teachings as something not active within themselves. This is demonstrated in the fact that these teachers also tend to work with the feelings, emotions, and relationships of their students:

> They have a process of nurturing and feeding positive qualities, with an acceptance of imperfection; emphasis on completeness and connectivity within the world; spontaneous rituals, and networking. In general, women seem less concerned with status, temples, and titles; and with schools and traditional teachings.[43]

They also tend to focus on the communication styles of students bringing their awareness to the fact that they are part of a larger environment, helping them to cultivate presence to themselves, others, and their environment, which is important in individualistic societies:

> Female lay teachers also tend to focus both on spoken word and nonverbal communication, and they work with the senses by means, for example, of chanting and movement."[44]

Female dharma practitioners may also integrate innovative and unique teachings methods to make the teaching relatable to students who might otherwise be unfamiliar with the discipline of meditative practice or who might have difficulty understanding challenging text. As a result, they are also inclined to try new and innovative teachings methods such as:

> Sitting in a circle, developing small discussion groups, painting, writing, even dancing and role playing. A woman Zen master regularly made walking outings with her students, teaching meditative practice. A Theravada teacher regularly goes to hot springs with her students and teaches mindful swimming. Other teachers have introduced charts and flip charts in teaching sessions.[45]

Naturally, the teaching methods used in the West, place the teachings in a context in which Western students can engage it as a part of their daily activities making it possible for them to view

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[42] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg. 278 & 279

[43] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg.282

[44] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg.279; refer to endnotes pg. 284

[45] Wetzel S., Westward Dharma Buddhism Beyond Asia, article: Neither Monk nor Nun Western Buddhists as Full-time Practitioners. (London, England: University of California Press, Ltd.2002) pg. 279- refer to footnotes pg. 284

it as something tangible and real even outside of their religious institution or Sunday rituals. What this signifies is that while most female lay practitioners focus almost solely on experiential teaching, they make the experience active and real through the integration of the experience through activity based practices that coincide with the daily activities of western students, thus making it more pragmatic and relatable for their purposes. The use of flip charts also helps to provide a pragmatic element to the more mystical component of meditative practice providing context to their experiences making the teachings understood in a foreign land. These methods also indicate that the lay female practitioner is primarily more concerned and sees more value in connecting with the student, being present to the student, and allowing the student to cultivate their own sense of presence through a variety of methods both incorporating experience and practical teachings. This is no doubt, the influence of first generation Western monastic nuns like Venerable Thubten Chodron and Venerable Ayya Khema. The methods and perspectives of both monastic and lay teachers will be necessary in bringing about a restructuring of Western spirituality.

This echoes the innate equanimity and universality within the Buddha's teachings affirming that they hold relevance and truth even in vastly differing social climates. Acceptance and support of these expressions is therefore, an act of understanding and equanimity, and an expression of the Buddha's teachings themselves. Because Western methods are non-traditional and secularly focused, and Western female Buddhist nuns and lay teachers hold different positions and obligations, it also becomes clear that it is the connection between people, the teacher's ability to be present and compassionate to herself and to the needs of her students, that provides this kind of universal translation of the dharma from one person to another. Presence; one's ability to bring their true self to the here and now, is the way in which one can love truly.[46] This is what is meant by active dharma.

As love is universal, this serves as evidence that it is the innate love and presence within the dharma that does and will continue to allow the teachings of the Buddha to flourish in the future, innately balanced even within ever changing cultural interpretations. This leads to the possibility that all persons, both teachers and students; Eastern and Westerners will be able to cultivate active dharma within themselves, presence; potentially making the dharma fluid within the greater human consciousness, bringing a realization to the teachings of the Buddha in the 21st century. One's ability to be present to both Eastern and Western ideologies will prove most beneficial to the global human consciousness in the future. As the West is more influenced by Eastern religion and culture, it is easy to believe that Eastern culture is so too influenced by American values that are largely separate from a sense of spiritual grounding and therefore, as well from a true sense of deep compassion, unity, love, and connectedness. This means that it is necessary for the teaching of the dharma and the spiritual awakening to become grounded in the West. This makes the Western female monastic and lay teacher profoundly valuable as together they make the dharma relatable and desirable to such a large percentage of Westerners as well as because they serve as a mid-way point between both realities. This again requires them to be deeply present and an asset to what may become a more global sense of spirituality, providing in that, a gift both the dharma and to humanity.

Therefore, the development of active dharma is the most influential, and inherent expression of the Buddha's teaching. It not only gives life to the naturally loving and inclusive message of the Buddha's teachings, but allows the dharma to integrate and expand in ways that allow it to thrive necessary in new lands. The dharma is present to us through the teachings of the Buddha both within the written word of doctrine and in the experiences of our daily lives. However, active

46 Nhat Hanh, Thich, True Love: A Practice for Awakening the Heart (Shambala Publications 2006) pg. 5&6

dharma requires that we in turn are present to the teachings, allowing them to transform our hearts and minds, our lives, as well as our environment. Therefore, the cultivation of the dharma in action; or presence, is the greatest gift we can give to the teachings because as social structures and ideologies will always remain impermanent, the love within the Buddha's teaching will remain constant supporting the transformation of all that is out of alignment with the integrity of love, compassion, understanding, and equanimity.

Buddha and the New Atheists: On the Art of Teaching the Dhamma in the Bible Belt

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Introduction:

This paper examines recent attempts to associate the Buddha and Buddhism with the movement called New Atheism. The underlying thesis of the paper is that the atheist interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism is misleading and counterproductive for teaching the Dhamma, at least in predominantly Christian countries; more specifically, in the Bible belt, a large area in the south and southeast of the United States in which an evangelical and socially conservative form of Christianity prevails.

The first part of the paper introduces the New Atheists and examines Stephen Batchelor's atheist interpretation of the Buddha of the Pāli Nikāyas. Special emphasis is given to the reading of Buddhism found in Sam Harris's best-seller *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (2004), and Stephen Batchelor's latest book *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist* (2010).

Stephen Batchelor describes the Buddha of the Pāli Nikāyas as an "ironic atheist." Although Batchelor does not relate his reading of the Buddha and Buddhism to the work of the New Atheists, the back cover of his book is endorsed by Christopher Hitchens, who together with Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennet, is one of the "four horsemen" of the New Atheist movement. According to Hitchens, "*Stephen Batchelor adds the universe of Buddhism to the many fields in which received truth and blind faith are now giving way to ethical and scientific humanism, in which lies our only real future*." The back cover also describes Batchelor's book as a "*stunning and groundbreaking recovery of the historical Buddha and his message.*" Thus, the connection between Batchelor's interpretation of the Buddha and the New Atheism seems unavoidable.

The second part explains some of the reactions I have encountered while discussing different interpretations of the Buddha at Eastern Kentucky University, a public institution in the heart of the Bible belt in which most students are Christians, many of them with a strong evangelical background. I draw on my own experience as a scholar-practitioner of Buddhism who teaches various courses related to World Religions including *Buddhism* and *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*.

Although Batchelor's overall understanding of the Buddha is psychologically sophisticated and probably appealing to secular humanists suspicious of "religion" and convinced that science provides the only valid means of knowledge, the atheist interpretation of Buddha is misleading and counterproductive to teach the Dhamma in Christian countries.

The atheist interpretation of the Buddha is misleading because it gives the impression that for Buddhists the question of God is primary, when in fact such question is, at least in the Pāli Nikāyas, open to several interpretations and only remotely related to the central question of suffering and its cessation. The atheist interpretation is counterproductive to teach the Dhamma in Christian countries

because for many Christians atheism is synonymous with immorality and confrontational attitudes that have little, if anything, to do with Buddhism. Instead of contributing to understanding Buddhism in its own terms, the atheist interpretation of the Buddha discourages Christians from studying the Dhamma seriously and with an open mind.

1. The New Atheist Interpretation of the Buddha

1.1. Sam Harris's Interpretation of the Buddhism

The "New Atheism" movement started with the publication of five books between 2004 and 2007. In 2004 Sam Harris published *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. In 2006 Harris published *Letter to a Christian Nation*, in which he responded to his Christian critics. Also in 2006, the philosopher Daniel Dennett published *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, and the biologist Richard Dawkins published *The God Delusion*. In 2007, physicist Victor J Stenger published *God: the Failed Hypothesis*. And in 2007, the journalist Christopher Hitchens published *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*.[1] All these books became best-sellers in the United States, and their authors, especially Harris, Dawkins, and Hitchens can be considered intellectual celebrities who appear on a variety of TV shows, deliver lectures in many American universities, and participate in debates about religion and the existence of God across the USA.

The "New Atheism" movement refers to the aforementioned books and those who sympathize with the authors' negative view of religion and faith. What distinguishes the new atheists from other atheists, agnostics, humanists, and followers of non-theistic traditions, is that the new atheists are more outspoken and confrontational in their attitude towards religion. Unlike moderate atheists, for whom atheism is primarily a philosophical standpoint, the new atheists are also social activists who encourage other atheists to be more proactive in order to counteract the negative effects of religion in societies around the world.

The new atheists can be understood as the secular counterpart of religious fundamentalists. Whereas religious extremists perceive the traditional values of their religions and cultures under attack by secular forces, the new atheists perceive science and world peace as threaten by religious violence and irrationality. As Armin W. Geertz states, "The growth of New Atheism in the United States during the last 20 years has closely paralleled the increase of religious extremism in the world."[2]

According to the journalist Simon Hooper, what the new atheists share is "a belief that religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises."[3] In fact, Sam Harris challenges religious moderates for believing that the path to peace "will be paved once each of us has learned to respect the unjustified

[1] Victor J. Stenger, *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2009) 13.

[2] Armin W. Geertz, "New Atheistic Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion," in *Contemporary Theories of Religion: a Critical Companion*, edited by Michael Stausberg, (London and New York: Routledge. 2009), 242-263.

[3] Accessed September 19, 2011. http://articles.cnn.com/2006-11-08/world/atheism.feature_1_new-atheists-new-atheism-religion?_s=PM:WORLD

beliefs of others."[4] For Harris, this ideal of tolerance has gone too far, and it is "one of the principal forces driving us toward the abyss."[5]

Thus, new atheists like Harris not only criticize religious extremists but also religious moderates who do nothing to oppose the growing influence of religious fundamentalism in public life. Religious extremists are to be challenged because their faith leads to harmful social consequences; moderates also need to be blamed for allowing fundamentalists to flourish in the name of freedom, tolerance and respect.

The new atheists tend to contrast science and reason with religion and faith. This negative view of religion and faith, however, at least in the case of Sam Harris, does not entail the rejection of spirituality and mysticism. Quite the contrary, Harris encourages people to adopt "a truly empirical approach to spiritual experience." Harris also recommends the study of what he calls "the Wisdom of the East," especially Buddhism.

How does Harris reconcile his atheism with his positive view of Buddhism and Eastern spirituality? Is Harris a Buddhist? What interpretation of Buddhism underlies Harris critique of religion and faith? In order to answer these questions we need to examine in more detail what Harris says.

In the last chapter of *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*, Harris states that religions make a claim about the human condition, namely, that "it is possible to have one's experience of the world radically transformed."[6] The problem, Harris explains, is that religions mix such claim with "the venom of unreason," that is, beliefs based on insufficient evidence. As an example of this combination of spirituality and incredible dogmas, Harris mentions the case of Jesus. The ethical teachings and the spiritual transformation experienced by Jesus was not enough for Christians, "He also had to be the Son of God, born of a virgin, and destined to return to earth trailing clouds of glory."[7] For Harris such beliefs place the example of Jesus out of reach and transform his empirical claims about the connection between ethics and spirituality into a "gratuitous, and rather gruesome, fairy tale."[8]

For Harris, the example of Jesus and many others sages demonstrates that it is possible to give a more profound response to our existence. That response is more than seeking health, wealth and good company. Genuine happiness requires spirituality and mysticism terms that Harris uses interchangeably.[9] Spirituality and mysticism are the means to attain "a form of well-being that is intrinsic to consciousness in every present moment."[10] For Harris, the possible transformation of our experience of the world through spirituality and mysticism need not be irrational. We need a rational approach to spirituality and mysticism. As Harris says "nothing need be believed on insufficient evidence for us to look into this possibility with an open mind."[11] However, our beliefs about God are an obstacle to a truly empirical approach to spiritual experience.[12]

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[4] Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York & London: W.W.Norton & Company), 14-15
[5] Ibid.,15.
[6] Ibid., 204.
[7] Ibid., 204.
[8] Ibid., 204.
[9] Ibid., 205.
[10] Ibid., 206.
[11] Ibid., 207.
[12] Ibid., 214.

Harris acknowledges that we do not know what happens after death and that the idea that the brain produces consciousness "is little more than an article of faith among scientist at present."[13] Likewise, we do not know exactly what the mental self actually is, although we do know that what we call the "I" cannot be found, "it actually disappears when looked for in a rigorous way."[14] Nevertheless, it is a fact that we all experience the feeling of what we call "I" as well as the duality of subject and object. For Harris, every problem we have ultimately derives from this experience of separateness, this experience of dualism. Therefore, Harris concludes: "It would seem that a spirituality that undermined such dualism, through the mere contemplation of consciousness, could not help but improve our situation."[15]

According to Harris, the non-dualistic spirituality we need to improve our situation can be found in what he calls "The Wisdom of the East." For Harris, Western traditions have not thought enough about personal transformation and liberation from the illusory nature of the self. That is why Harris suggests that many people in the West are conceptually unequipped to understand empirical claims about spirituality.[16]

Harris does not deny that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam contain spiritual teachings that demonstrate profound knowledge of consciousness and the stages of personal transformation. Similarly, Harris does not claim that Asian religions are perfect or free from dogmas, false prophets, and charlatan saints. Rather, the point seems to be that Asian religions overall have paid more attention to the nature of consciousness and meditation than monotheistic religions. In their empirical approach to spirituality, the great Asian sages have no equivalents in the west. In Harris' own words:

> "when the great philosopher mystics of the East are weighed against the patriarchs of Western philosophical and theological traditions, the difference is unmistakable: Buddha, Shankara, Padmasambhava, Nagarjuna, Longchenpa, and countless others down to the present have no equivalents in the west. In spiritual terms, we appear to have been standing on the shoulders of dwarfs. It is little wonder, therefore, that many Western scholars have found the view within rather unremarkable." [17]

In a long note to the above quote, Harris elaborates on his view of monotheistic religions. The mystical insights of Meister Eckhart, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Theresa of Avila, and many others "for the most part, remained shacked to the dualism of church doctrine, and accordingly, failed to fly." The mystical impulses of Jewish contemplatives were similarly constrained, and Islamic mysticism, i.e., Sufism, has been generally considered a form of heresy.[18] While Harris acknowledges that there are many contemplatives and mystics in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, he contends that this says nothing about the adequacy of the Bible and the Koran as contemplative manuals. For Harris, "the failures of faith-based religion are so conspicuous, its historical degradation so great, its intolerance so of this world, that I think it is time we stopped making excuses for it."[19]

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[13] Ibid., 209.

[14] Ibid., 214.

[15] Ibid., 214.

[16] "Personal transformation, or indeed liberation from the illusion of the self, seems to have been thought too much to ask: or rather, not thought at all. Consequently, many of us in the West we are conceptually unequipped to understand empirical claims of the sort adduced above," Ibid., 215.

[17] Ibid., 215.

[18] Ibid., 294.

[19] Ibid., 295.

In order to illustrate his claim about the spiritual superiority of Asian religions, Harris quotes a single passage by the Indian Buddhist Padmasambhava. Harris claims that he has selected the passage at random from a shelf of Buddhist literature. The passage describes the nature of self-awareness as a lucid clarity that is empty and pure, without any duality of clarity and emptiness. Then Harris concludes that "One could live an eon as a Christian, a Muslim, or a Jew and never encounter any teachings like this about the nature of consciousness."[20]

What distinguishes the aforementioned Buddhist passage from the teachings of monotheistic religions is that it limits itself to describe the nature of consciousness. This description is merely phenomenological, that is, it is not metaphysical in nature, it only explains what someone experiences as the content of her or his awareness. Harris goes as far as to states that contemporary literature on consciousness "cannot match the kind of precise, phenomenological studies that can be found throughout the Buddhist canon."[21]

Harris does not claim to be a Buddhist, only that he has a "debt to a variety of contemplative traditions that have their origin in India."[22] However, for Harris Buddhism excels other traditions in spiritual sophistication and in number of methods to transform the human mind.[23] More specifically, according to Harris, "it remains true that the esoteric teachings of Buddhism offer the most complete methodology we have for discovering the intrinsic freedom of consciousness, unencumbered by any dogma."[24]

In order to illustrate the spiritual superiority of Tibetan Buddhism, Harris compares the meetings of the Dalai Lama with Christian representatives to the hypothetical meetings of Cambridge physicists with the Bushmen of the Kalahari to discuss their respective understandings of the physical universe.[25] The Christian view of spiritual matters, like the worldview of the Bushmen is based on irrational beliefs; on the contrary, the spiritual teachings of Buddhists are similar to the way Cambridge physicists conceive the universe, i.e., rational and based on empirical observation. For Harris, the spiritual instructions found in the Bible are less precise and far less numerous that the spiritual instructions found in Buddhist texts.[26]

The aforementioned contrast between Buddhist and Christian approaches to spirituality does not mean that everything within Christianity is primitive and intellectually unsophisticated, or that all aspects of Buddhism are rational and scientific. For Harris, Buddhism is not free from dogmas and religious elements. In fact, Harris suggests that Tibetan Buddhists are saddled with certain dogmas, but qualifies that physicists are not different in this regard.[27] Likewise, Harris says that Buddhism

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[20] Ibid., 216.
[21] Ibid., 217.
[22] Ibid., 217.
[23] "Buddhism, in particular, has grown remarkably sophisticated. No other tradition has developed so many methods by which the human mind can be fashioned into a tool capable of transforming itself" Ibid., 293.
[24] Ibid., 293-4.
[25] "It is no exaggeration to say that meetings between the Dalai Lama and Christian ecclesiastics to mutually honor their religious traditions are like meeting physicists from Cambridge and the Bushmen of the Kalahari to mutually honor their respective understanding of the physical universe." Ibid., 294.
[26] "Any person familiar with both literatures will know that the Bible does not contain a discernible fraction of the precise spiritual instructions that can be found in the Buddhist canon." Ibid., 294.
[27] This is not to say that Tibetan Buddhists are not saddled with certain dogmas (so are physicists) or that the Bushmen could not have formed some conception of the atom. Ibid., 294.

has also been a source of ignorance and occasional violence, but clarifies that Buddhism “is not a religion of faith, or a religion at all, in the western sense.”[28]

Harris accuses millions of Buddhists of ignoring that Buddhism is not a religion of faith or not a religion at all in the Western sense. These Buddhists who ignore that Buddhism is an empirical and scientific approach to spirituality “can be found in temples throughout Southeast Asia, and even in the West, praying to Buddha as though he were a numinous incarnation of Santa Claus.”[29] Such expressions of devotion to the Buddha are for Harris a “distortion of the tradition.”[30]

The aforementioned dogmas and religious elements found in Buddhist traditions do not put Buddhism on par with other religions. Although Harris does not see any reason to be dogmatically attached to a particular spiritual tradition, it would be intellectually dishonest not to acknowledge the preeminence of Buddhism as a system of spiritual instruction.[31]

Despite of the fact that for Harris Buddhist spiritual teachings are superior to the teachings of other spiritual traditions, this does not mean that Harris endorses Buddhism. In a short article entitled “Killing the Buddha” published in the Buddhist magazine Shambhala Sun (March 2006: 73-75), Harris who goes as far as to suggest that we should follow the ninth-century Rinzai Zen master Lin-Chi and “kill the Buddha,” which for Harris refers to the killing Buddhism.

According to Harris, it would be nice if Buddhism spreads in the world, but this is not likely to happen any time soon. For Harris, Buddhism cannot successfully compete with the relentless evangelizing of Christianity and Islam. Instead of adopting aggressive proselytizing methods, Harris encourages Buddhists to abandon Buddhism as the best way to maximize the impact of the Buddha’s wisdom in the world today. In Harris’ words:

> “to turn the Buddha into a religious fetish is to miss the essence of what he taught. In considering what Buddhism can offer the world in the twenty-first century, I propose that we take Lin Chi’s admonishment rather seriously. As students of the Buddha, we should dispense with Buddhism…The wisdom of the Buddha is currently being trapped within the religion of Buddhism… So insofar as we maintain a discourse as “Buddhists,” we ensure that the wisdom of the Buddha will do little to inform the development of civilization in the twenty-first century.”[32]

For Harris, it is better not to describe oneself as a “Buddhist” in order to avoid being complicit in the word’s violence and ignorance.[33] Similarly, it is counterproductive to present as “Buddhist” whatever truths may be found in Buddhist literature, e.g., emptiness, selflessness, and impermanence. Describing as “Buddhist” truths about the mind and the world because they were discovered by Buddhists is like talking about Christian physics and Muslim algebra because they were discovered by Christians and Muslims. Identifying any truth as “Buddhist” will confuse the matter for others. What we need, according to Harris, is a contemplative science, that is, a scientific approach to

[28] Ibid., 294.
[29] Ibid., 293.
[30] Ibid., 293.
[31] “Though there is much in Buddhism that I do not pretend to understand—as well as much that seems deeply implausible—it would be intellectually dishonest not to acknowledge its preeminence as a system of spiritual instruction.” Ibid., 294.
[32] Sam Harris, “Killing the Buddha” *Shambhala Sun*, March 2006, pp.73-74.
[33] Ibid., 74.

spirituality and mysticism. For Harris, such scientific approach will not develop by attempting to spread any particular kind of Buddhism, be it "American Buddhism" "Western Buddhism" or "Engaged Buddhism." Students of the Buddha are in a unique position to further our understanding of the mind, "but the religion of Buddhism currently stands in our way."[34]

In conclusion, Harris proposes a rational and empirical approach to spirituality and mysticism. This approach requires that we study scientifically methods to explore and modify consciousness throughout the history of spirituality; such methods include fasting, chanting, sensory deprivation, prayer, meditation, and the use of psychotropic plants. Special attention should be given to the study of meditation[35] and "the Wisdom of the East," especially Buddhist traditions.

Mysticism and spirituality are rational enterprises, whereas religion is not. Mystics have empirical reasons for what they believe, religious people may have reasons too, but they are not empirical. We need not believe anything on insufficient evidence and that is precisely what religion wants us to do. We need to bring reason, spirituality and ethics together; this marks the beginning of a rational approach to spirituality and this bringing together of ethics, spirituality and reason will be *the end of faith*.[36]

1.2. Stephen Batchelor's Interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism

Stephen Batchelor is a contemporary Buddhist teacher born in Scotland in 1953. He studied Tibetan Buddhism in India (1972-75), Switzerland (1975-79), and Germany (1979-81). Batchelor was ordained as a monk in the Tibetan tradition in 1976, but in 1981 he travelled to South Korea to become a monk in the Zen tradition. He left South Korea in 1984 and disrobed in 1985 to marry Martine Fages, a former nun he met in South Korea. They live in France since 2000.

Batchelor has translated and written several books about Buddhism including *The Awakening of the West* (1994), the best-seller *Buddhism without Beliefs*: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening (1997), *Living with the Devil: A Meditation on Good and Evil* (1997), and *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist* (2010).

In *Buddhism without Beliefs*, Batchelor advocates an agnostic approach to Buddhism. According to Batchelor, "An agnostic Buddhist eschews atheism as much as theism."[37] However, in 2010, in *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, Stephen Batchelor describes himself as a "Buddhist atheist" and characterizes the Buddha as an "ironic atheist."

Although Batchelor does not relate his atheism and his atheist reading of the Buddha to the New Atheism movement, the back cover of his book is endorsed by Christopher Hitchens, who together with Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennet, is one of the "four horsemen" of New Atheism. According to Hitchens, "*Stephen Batchelor adds the universe of Buddhism to the many fields in which received truth and blind faith are now giving way to ethical and scientific humanism, in which lies our only real future*." Thus, since Batchelor's book is endorsed by the new

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[34] Ibid., 74.

[35] Harris defines meditation as "any means whereby our sense of "self"—of subject/object dualism in perception and cognition—can be made vanish, while consciousness remains vividly aware of the continuum of experience." Ibid., 217.

[36] Ibid., 221.

[37] Stephen Batchelor, *Buddhism without Beliefs*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 1997), 19.

atheist Hitchens, and since Batchelor describes himself and the Buddha as atheists, the connection between Batchelor, the Buddha, and New Atheism seems unavoidable.

Has Batchelor shifted from Buddhist agnosticism to Buddhist atheism? How does Batchelor justify his atheist interpretation of the Buddha? What interpretation of Buddhism does Batchelor advocate? In order to answer these questions we need to examine in more detail Batchelor's ideas about the Buddha and Buddhism.

In *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, Batchelor narrates his personal journey as a Buddhist and develops an atheist interpretation of the Buddha. The back cover describes Batchelor's book as a "*stunning and groundbreaking recovery of the historical Buddha and his message.*" In order to reconstruct the historical Buddha, Batchelor focuses on the Pāli Canon. Batchelor contends the Pāli Canon provide an inconsistent image of the Buddha: a solitary figure, a heroic public figure, an accomplished meditator, a miracle worker with supernatural powers, a messianic "Great Man" with superhuman physical marks, and an ordinary monk.[38] Batchelor discards idealized images of the Buddha as a serene and perfect teacher who cannot do anything wrong. For Batchelor, the Buddha was a human being like the rest of us, and like us, he was not morally perfect and he had to live in an unpredictable world. The Buddha was not omniscient; he did not know what might happen in the future.[39]

Following Trevor Ling, Batchelor interprets the Buddha as someone who did not intend to found a new religion but rather a new civilization.[40] That is, the Buddha was not a world-renouncing monk whose main interest was liberation from the cycle of saṃsāra through some sort of mystical contemplation. Rather, the Buddha was a social critic and reformer who advocated a new way of life not only for individuals but also for communities.[41]

For Batchelor, the traditional story of the Buddha's life is one of the greatest obstacles to understand his social engagement and his vision for humankind. The image of the Buddha as a world-renouncing monk is problematic.[42] The traditional story according which the Buddha was the son of a king is also inaccurate. The truth is that his father was just a leading nobleman of the Gotama clan, a regional governor at most subject to king Pasenadi of Kosala. Likewise, the traditional story of the Buddha going outside his palace and seeing for the first time a sick person, an old person, a dead person, and a holy person, is part of a mythical story about a former Buddha. For Batchelor, the story of the four sights "has nothing to do with Gotama himself." Even the Buddha's first name "Siddhattha" does not even appear in the Pāli Canon.[43]

For Batchelor, the key to understand the Buddha's character and vision for humankind is his relationship with King Pasenadi. The Buddha compares his enlightenment to the discovery of an ancient path leading to an ancient city. For Batchelor, this simile indicates that the Buddha saw his teaching, not as an other-wordly religion to free oneself from karma and rebirth, but rather "as the template for a civilization." This socially engaged goal required more than the support of monks and nuns, it needed the cooperation of King Pasenadi of Kosala.[44]

38 Stephen Batchelor, *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010), 213.
39 Ibid., 109.
40 Ibid., 102.
41 Ibid., 109.
42 Ibid., 124.
43 Ibid., 104.
44 Ibid., 110.

Batchelor explains how his understanding of the Buddha changed as he became more familiar with the Pāli canon. He began to suspect that the Mahāyāna traditions he studied as a Tibetan and Zen monk had lost sight of what the Buddha originally taught. However, Batchelor does not go as far as to equate the Pāli canon with the original teachings of the Buddha.

Batchelor distinguishes between what is and is not an intrinsic part of the Buddha's teachings. According to Batchelor, the original approach of the Buddha was therapeutic and pragmatic, not speculative and metaphysical.[45] However, the Buddha's words were transformed into the religion we call Buddhism.

The criterion to differentiate Buddhism from what is intrinsic to the Buddha's teachings is simple: if a teaching cannot be derived from the matrix of classical Indian thought, then it does not correspond to the Buddha's distinctive voice. In Batchelor's words: "Anything attributed to him [Buddha] that could just as well have been said in the classical Indian texts of the Upanishads or Vedas, I would bracket off and put to one side."[46]

For Batchelor, the doctrines of karma and rebirth, the belief in gods and other realms of existence, the idea of freedom from the cycle of life and death, and the concept of a consciousness that is unconditioned, they all predate the Buddha. Therefore, Batchelor concludes, they were not "intrinsic to what the Buddha taught, but simply a reflection of ancient Indian cosmology and soteriology."[47]

In order to justify that the Buddha's original approach does not include the doctrines of karma and rebirth, Batchelor reinterprets the undetermined questions. For Batchelor, the Buddha's refusal to address the undetermined questions "undermines the possibility of constructing a theory of reincarnation."[48] More specifically, the Buddha's refusal to address the questions about whether mind and body are identical or different, and the questions about the Tathāgata or liberated being after death, indicates that the Buddha was reluctant to affirm an immaterial mind and a postmortem existence. And, Batchelor concludes, without such beliefs in the immateriality of mind and the existence of an after life, "it is difficult—if not impossible—to speak coherently about rebirth and karma."[49]

For Batchelor, the teachings intrinsic to the Buddha's original approach are four: the principle of specific conditionality or dependent origination, the process of the four noble truths, the practice of mindfulness, and the power of self-reliance.[50] These four teachings cannot be derived from ancient Indian thought. For Batchelor, these teachings are "the four core elements of the Dhamma," and "the four axioms." These four elements of the Dhamma frame the way of life anticipated by the Buddha and his vision for a new civilization.

For Batchelor, the Dhamma should not be confused with the religion we call Buddhism. Unlike Buddhism, the Dhamma is to be lived, not just believed in. Living according to the Dhamma involves more than just practicing the aforementioned four teachings, it also requires that "one embraces this world in all its contingency and specificity, with all its ambiguity and flaws."[51]

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[45] Stephen Batchelor, *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010), 100.
[46] Ibid., 101.
[47] Ibid., 100.
[48] Ibid., 100.
[49] Ibid., 100.
[50] Ibid., 237.
[51] Ibid., 237.

This embrace of the world and its contingency presupposes a new interpretation of the Buddha's awakening.

According to Batchelor, awakening is not a new insight into some higher truth, i.e., the four noble truths, but rather a new perspective in which we wake up to the groundless ground of this world. In fact, for Batchelor, the four noble truths are not true because they correspond to the way things are but rather because they are useful, that is, when put into practice, they can enhance the quality of our life.[52]

Life in this world is groundless. Batchelor describes the groundless ground of life as follows: "no sooner does it appear, than it disappears, only to renew itself, then immediately break up and vanish again." [53] This awakening to the groundless ground is not so much a cognitive act as it is an existential readjustment that allows us to establish a new relationship with the impermanence of life. In this new relationship with the impermanence of life, we stop obsessing with the past and the future, and we remain conscious of what happens in the present, that is, we focus on the "contingent world as it unravels moment to moment." [54]

Focusing on this groundless world and the contingent present requires training in mindfulness. For Batchelor, mindfulness has nothing to do with anything transcendent or divine. Quite the contrary, mindfulness "serves as an antidote to theism, a cure for sentimental piety, a scalpel for excising the tumor of metaphysical belief." [55]

Not even nirvana is transcendent. The Buddha, according to Batchelor, "rejected the idea that freedom or salvation lay in gaining privileged access to an eternal, non-contingent source or ground, whether it be called Atman or God, Pure Consciousness or the Absolute." [56] Nirvana is simply a way of being in this world that is not conditioned by greed, hatred, and confusion; a way of being that penetrates deep into the contingent heart of the world.[57] The Buddha woke up to the "this vast open field of contingently arising events."[58]

Batchelor contends in several places that the Buddha rejected the existence of any transcendent reality, whether it is called nirvana, God, Self, Brahman, Consciousness. For Batchelor, the Buddha's awakening to the contingent ground of life "contradicted the belief in an eternal soul and, by implication, in the transcendent reality of God." [59] Rather than teaching the need to liberate the soul from the body and the physical universe in order to achieve mystical union with God, the Buddha encouraged his disciples to pay attention to the rise and fall of the world, "noticing its emergence and disappearance, its ephemerality, its impersonality, its joy and its tragedy, its allure, its terror."[60]

Unlike many brahmins and ascetics of his day, the Buddha did not belief in an eternal soul or self that is identical to the transcendent reality of Brahman (God). [61] Similarly, the Buddha did

[52] Ibid., 199.
[53] Ibid., 128.
[54] Ibid., 129.
[55] Ibid., 130.
[56] Ibid., 131.
[57] Ibid., 131.
[58] Ibid., 130.
[59] Ibid., 134.
[60] Ibid., 134.
[61] Ibid., 131.

not believe that the goal of the spiritual path was to achieve mystical union of the individual soul with the transcendent reality of God.[62] Batchelor compares what the Buddha did for the self to what Copernicus did for the earth. Instead of regarding the self as the center of the spiritual universe, the Buddha contended that the self, like everything in the universe, is a fluid and contingent process.

For Batchelor, the Buddha's attitude toward the religions of his day was revolutionary, he was "a dissenter, a radical, an iconoclast. He wanted nothing to do with the priestly religion of the brahmins. He dismissed its theology as unintelligible, its ritual as pointless, and the social structure it legitimated as unjust."[63] Similarly, Batchelor contends that the Buddha "rejected all notions of a transcendent God or Self, openly criticized the system of caste, mocked the beliefs of the Brahmins and other religious teachers of his day, and accepted nuns into his community as equals with the monks"[64]

In sum, for Batchelor the Buddha denies the existence of God because he denied the existence of a transcendent reality. The Buddha awoke to the impermanent, impersonal, contingent, and dependently originated nature of the world, and nirvana is simply a mental state free from greed, hate, and confusion. However, in Batchelor's reading, the Buddha denied not only an impersonal concept of God, i.e., a transcendent reality, but also the theistic concept of God.

Batchelor admits he does not understand when someone asks him whether he believes in God; he is also puzzled by those who claim not to believe in God. For Batchelor the traditional meaning of God is problematic because it combines personal and impersonal characteristics.

In the West, God is presented as the source and ground of everything; for Thomas Aquinas God is Being itself, and the New Testament tell us God is love and He sent his only begotten Son into the world. Batchelor asks "how can the ultimate source and ground of everything have an emotion like "love" or an intention to "incarnate"? In what possible sense can Being itself be thought as a Person?"[65] The problem is not solved, Batchelor suggests, by saying that God is unknowable and ineffable. Similarly, in Indian thought it is difficult to reconcile the concept of an unknowable, transcendent, and impersonal Brahman with an anthropomorphic concept of Consciousness. For Batchelor, both images of God, the Indian and the Judeo-Christian are human constructions, they "bear the indelible imprint of their creator: the conscious human person."[66]

In order to demonstrate that the Buddha rejected the theistic God, Batchelor quotes three texts from the Pāli Nikāyas. He does not provide the reference and does not discuss the context of these texts.

The first text Batchelor quotes appears in the *Tevijja Sutta* (D.I.235-240). There, the Buddha compares a file of blind men to the brahmanical tradition. In the same way that each blind men follows the other blind men before him, brahmins repeat what other brahmins of the past claim about the path to attain union with the personal god Brahmā without actually having experienced such union; none of the brahmins have seen Brahmā face to face, they just follow tradition blindly.

[62] Ibid., 133.
[63] Ibid., 135.
[64] Ibid., 167.
[65] Ibid., 177.
[66] Ibid., 178.

The second text appears in the *Cūḷasakuludāyi Sutta* or Short discourse to Sakuludāyin (M.I.32-35). In a conversation with the ascetic Udāyin, the Buddha compares those who teach out of faith "this is the perfect and highest splendor" with those who claim to be in love with the most beautiful woman without actually knowing how or who she is.

The third text appears in the Kevaddha Sutta (D.I.215-223). There, a monk asks a variety of gods "where the four great elements cease without remainder." Not even the highest personal god Brahmā is able to answer this question. Only the Buddha knows the answer, the implication being that the knowledge of Buddhas is superior to that of gods, even superior to the knowledge of the supreme god Brahmā, who claims to be omniscient, the lord, creator and father of all beings.

Although none of the aforementioned three texts question the existence of gods, Batchelor describes the Buddha is an "ironic atheist."[67] Batchelor clarifies that the Buddha's rejection of God was not the main concern of his teaching, and that his atheism should not be mistaken with the aggressive atheism of western modernity.[68]

In order to differentiate the atheism of the Buddha from Western atheism, Batchelor suggests that it would be more accurate to call the later "anti-theism." Thus, the Buddha was an atheist in the literal sense of the word, not an "anti-theist." The word "God" was not part of the Buddha's vocabulary. The Buddha's concern was the practice of mindfulness and the suffering of this conditionally arisen world.

According to Batchelor, for the Buddha there is not a higher reality beyond or underlying this world. The world is an open field of contingent events, and "all events are ontologically equivalent: mind is not more "real" than matter, nor matter more "real" than mind."[69] Consciousness is also contingent and impermanent. There is nothing else but this world, not even another existence after death. As Batchelor puts it, "There are no wormholes in this intricate and fluid filed through which one can wriggle out, either to reach union with God or move on to another existence after death."[70]

For Batchelor, we are alone in this universe and we alone have to define what we are with our actions. Nobody can help us, and "there is no point in praying for divine guidance or assistance."[71] In order to illustrate this point, Batchelor quotes again the Tevijja Sutta. This time the section in which the Buddha tells the brahmin Vaseṭṭha that those who invoke Hindu gods to attain union with the God Brahmā are like those who would like to cross a river by asking the other shore to come here.[72]

Batchelor acknowledges that his goal is not to provide an objective interpretation of the Buddha, but rather to do "what I can only call *theology*—albeit theology without *theos*."[73] He admits that his reading of the Buddha is selective and based on the passages that best fit his own views and biases as a secular Westerner. For Batchelor, there is nothing intellectually dishonest with his selective interpretation of Buddhist texts because all Buddhist schools have done exactly the same.[74]

[67] Batchelor, *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, 179.

[68] "The rejection of God is not a mainstay of his teaching and he did not get worked up about it. Such passages have the flavor of a diversion, a light entertainment, in which another of humanity's irrational opinions is gently ridiculed and then put aside. This approach is in contrast to the aggressive atheism that periodically erupts in the modern West." Ibid., 179.

[69] Ibid., 180.

[70] Ibid., 181.

[71] Ibid., 181.

[72] (D.I.244-5).

[73] Batchelor, *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, 181.

[74] Ibid., 181.

Thus, although the texts Batchelor quotes do not necessarily suggest that the Buddha rejected the existence of God and gods, he nevertheless uses them to argue that the Buddha was an ironic atheist who rejected the theistic beliefs of his contemporaries and "enjoyed poking fun at the absurdity of their claims."[75]

Interestingly, Batchelor claims that most Buddhists throughout Asia are and always have been polytheists because they believe in spirits and gods. Batchelor acknowledges that for Buddhists gods are downgraded and less important as the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.[76] Similarly, Batchelor states that the Buddha "did not reject the existence of the gods, he marginalize them."[77] Yet, Batchelor does not describe the Buddha as a polytheist but rather as an ironic atheist.

The Buddha, like most Buddhists, accepts the existence of gods. For both the Buddha and most Buddhists, the cosmological and soteriological role of gods is irrelevant. They do not create the universe or sustain the cosmic order, and they cannot liberate beings from suffering. Yet, gods play an important role in the life of both the Buddha and Buddhists. However, Batchelor uses the label atheism in the case of the Buddha and polytheism in the case of most Buddhists. It is unclear why Batchelor consider Buddhists polytheists and the Buddha an ironic atheist despite of the fact that both share a common view of gods.

Although Batchelor criticizes Buddhism, he does not reject all religious aspects of Buddhism in order to spread the practice of the Buddha's teachings. Batchelor acknowledges that we need Buddhist orthodoxies and institutions to preserve the teachings of different Buddhist traditions. The point, for Batchelor, is not to abandon all Buddhist institutions and dogmas, but rather to realize they are not timeless entities that have to be ruthlessly defended or forcibly imposed upon others.

Batchelor does not think that a nebulous and eclectic "spirituality" is a satisfactory solution for the twenty-first century. The solution that Batchelor proposes is what can be called "collage Buddhism." That is, Batchelor compares his Buddhist practice to a collage that draws on the teachings and practices that best work for him as a layman in today's world. In his words:

"To practice the Dhamma is like making a collage. You collect ideas, images, insights, philosophical styles, meditation methods, and ethical values that you find here and there in Buddhism, bind them securely together, then launch your raft into the river of your life. As long as it does not sink or disintegrate and can get you to the other shore, then it works. That is all that matters. It need not correspond to anyone else's idea of what "Buddhism" is or should be."[78]

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[75] Ibid., 178.

[76] "Most Buddhists throughout Asia are and always have been polytheists. They believe in the existence of a range of spirits and gods whose worlds intersect with our own. These entities do not have a merely symbolic existence; they are real beings with consciousness, autonomy, and agency, who can grant favors if pleased and wreak havoc if offended… On formally becoming a Buddhist, one "take refuge" in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, thereby renouncing reliance on these beings. But spirits and gods are only downgraded, not abolished. They continue to play a role in one's personal and social life" Ibid., 197.

[77] "Siddhattha Gotama did not reject the existence of the gods, he marginalize them. He may have mocked their conceits but he acknowledged their presence. At times they even functioned as inspirational voices that prompted him to act." Ibid. 198.

[78] Batchelor, *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist*, 229.

For Batchelor, the institutions and dogmas of Buddhism are necessary to preserve the Buddha's teachings, but we should be dogmatic about what Buddhism is or should be. Buddhism can be many things and we can all create our own Buddhist collage as long as it works for us. The assumption underlying Batchelor's concept of collage Buddhism is that a Buddhist teaching is true not because it corresponds to something that exists "out there," but simply because it is useful.[79]

Batchelor advocates a collage approach to Buddhism and distinguishes between what is intrinsic to the Buddha's teachings and what is part of the religion called Buddhism. The Buddha's teachings tend to be equated with Dhamma practice, whereas Buddhism has to do with the beliefs in karma, rebirth, gods, and liberation from *saṃsāra*. Batchelor also distinguishes between the ironic atheism of the Buddha and the polytheism of most Buddhists. Nirvana is not a transcendent, deathless, and unconditioned reality, but a mere psychological state that is not conditioned by greed, hatred and delusion. The Buddha's awakening does not involve insight into higher truths or liberation from the cycle of life and death, it is just a new perspective in which this world is mindfully embraced in all its contingency, with all its joys and sufferings. There is nothing but this life and this world, and awakening is a simple existential adjustment to cope with the uncertainty and ambivalence of life.

Batchelor's presentation of the Buddha and Buddhism is problematic. Here I limit myself to point out an inconsistency between his concept of truth and his ideas about the Buddha and Buddhism. Batchelor's concept of truth seems to entail that "anything goes as long as it works." This pragmatic concept of truth is at odds with the Buddha's concept of truth as well as with Batchelor's own critique of Buddhism. If traditional Buddhism "works" for many people, and if it helps to preserve the Buddha's teachings, why then is it necessary Batchelor's existentialist, secular, and atheist rendition of the Buddha? What are the normative grounds that justify Batchelor's reconstruction of the Buddha if all Buddhist collages are fine insofar as they are useful? Is not it internally incoherent to propose a normative understanding of the Buddha and the Dharma, while at the same time claiming that every Buddhist raft that "works" is pragmatically true?

2. The Art of Teaching the Dhamma in the Bible Belt

In what follows I discus the problems I have encountered while teaching atheist interpretations of the Buddha and Buddhism at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), a public institution in the heart of the Bible belt in which most students are Christians, many of them with a strong evangelical background. I draw on my own experience as a scholar-practitioner of Buddhism who teaches various courses related to World Religions including *Buddhism* and *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*.

The first problem I have encountered while teaching the ideas of new atheists at EKU is that their negative view of religions does not encourage students to learn about other religions. Instead of helping students to see for themselves whether all, none, most, or some aspects of religions are a source of ignorance and eventually violence, the negative view of religions presents all religious traditions and all aspects of religions as intellectually naïve and the main root of evil in the world.

Both Harris and Batchelor interpret the Buddha and Buddhism while presupposing a negative view of religions. All religions including Buddhism share a primitive and superstitious worldview

[79] Ibid., 199.

that includes beliefs in supernatural powers and metaphysical realities. Similarly, for Harris and Batchelor religious fundamentalists are not that different from moderate and progressive religious people because they all accept irrational beliefs on insufficient evidence.

One of the goals of my courses about Buddhism and World Religions is to show that religions are intrinsically diverse. That is, I would like students to understand religions in non-essentialist terms as dynamic and historically conditioned realities that cannot be defined once and for all. Religions are fluid processes with multiple historical layers as well as many traditions and sub-traditions. Likewise, religious people are not monolithic. There are conservative, ultra-conservative, moderate, progressive, and ultra-progressive factions in all religions. I also challenge sectarian concepts of religions that use a particular historical period or just one tradition to define the nature of a religion.

Another goal of my courses is to help students to appreciate, and if possible respect, the elements of truth and goodness that may be found in other religions. I would like students to understand other religions in their own terms as much as possible, and to keep an open mind while listening to what people from other religions have to say about themselves.

By presenting religion and faith in general as sources of ignorance and violence, the new atheists discourage students from even paying attention to what people from other religions actually think and do. Instead of fostering appreciation and respect for the elements of truth and goodness that may be found across religions, the negative view of religion characteristic of atheists misleads students to believe that all religions and all religious people are alike. While this negative view of religions need not be conducive to violence, it does not help to facilitate mutual understanding and peace among religions either. Rather than dispelling misconceptions and clarifying misunderstandings, as good interreligious education is supposed to do, the negative view of religions reinforces secular stereotypes about the lack of intellectual sophistication among religious people. The religious other is reduced to a source of ignorance and violence, and the possibility of seeing religions as a source of wisdom and inspiration is rule out.

Many of my students have been taught that Christianity is superior to other religions, and that Jesus Christ is the only way to attain salvation. While my goal is not to challenge the claims of any religion, I do want students to think more critically about their beliefs and realize that most religions, not just Christians, make similar claims about the absolute truth and the unique superiority of their traditions. I also point out that the universal claims of superiority and absolute truth made by most religions tend to be a priori, that is, before experience or without having studied other religions.

Not all students are open to reconsider their beliefs about the inferiority of the religious other, but at least they understand that their claims are questionable insofar as they are not based on careful study of the data available. In this regard, I explain to my students, claiming that religions in general are a source of violence and ignorance is not that different from claiming that all non-Christian religions are inferior and soteriologically useless. Both the fundamentalist view of other religions and the new atheist view of religions presuppose a faith-based claim, not a comprehensive study of religions. Negative claims about religion are not based on an objective study of all aspects of religions, e.g., the positive role of religions as sources of wisdom and peace. Similarly, supremacist and absolutist claims about Christianity are not based on an objective study of religions.

I encourage students to see for themselves and think whatever they want about other religions, but only after they have listened and studied their basic teachings and practices. At the end of all my courses, students realize how simplistic is to generalize about religions and view them as either good or evil, as sources of ignorance or wisdom. Students have learned that such generalizations about religions are a sign of ignorance. Students have studied the history of religions and realized that there are dark chapters in most religions and various kinds of religious followers. Not everything among the religions is good and a source of wisdom, but not everything is evil and a sign of ignorance.

The response of my students to the atheist view of religions is for the most part negative. Only a small group of students (10%) tend to agree with Harris and Batchelor in understanding religion and faith as intellectually naïve and as a source of intolerance. For the overwhelming majority of my students, religion and faith are a source of meaning, emotional comfort, and ethical conduct. That is, for the majority of my students (70-80 %), being religious is not synonymous with being irrational and narrow-minded. Harris and Batchelor assume that science and reason are incompatible with religion and faith. However, for most of my students religion and faith need not be in contradiction with the findings of science.

It is true that for a minority of students (20-30%), the Bible is literally true and without errors of any kind. For this minority of students, creation took place as the book of genesis claims, and, therefore, evolution must be false. But even these students will not say that religion and faith in general are a source of violence and ignorance. For instance, students who interpret the creation stories and the Bible literally, accept religious diversity and freedom of religion as an inalienable right, and differentiate themselves from what they perceive as irrationality of suicide bombers who expect to be greeted in paradise by seventy-two virgins.

Although most of my students disagree with both the fundamentalist and the atheist view of religions, most of them share a common theistic concept of religion. That is, they all tend to define religion as a set of beliefs that requires faith in and worship of a supernatural power or powers that create and govern the universe. As the Oxford University Press online dictionary puts it, religion is "*the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods*."[80]

During the first week of class, I explain that the theistic concept of religion is outdated and biased. Definitions of religion as involving creeds and reverence for God/s were prevalent in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The definition applies mainly to Christianity and, to a lesser extent, to other monotheistic religions. The problem, however, is that not all religions are theistic, and not all monotheistic religions emphasize creeds as Christianity does. For instance, Buddhism and Taoism are not theistic religions, and neither Judaism nor Islam define their identity mainly in terms of beliefs in certain doctrines. Thus, I tell my students, in order to avoid taking sides in favor of Christianity and monotheistic religions, we need a broader concept of religion that can encompass Buddhism and Taoism.

Another point I make during the first week of class is that even a non-theistic concept of religion remain problematic because the term "religion" carries with it Christian and Western assumptions. For many scholars, the concept of religion is not culturally neutral. I mention recent debates about the concept of religion, and how some contemporary scholars of religion goes as far as to claim that the term "religion" should not be imposed onto other cultures.

80 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/religion. Accessed on October 11th, 2011.

While I agree with much of the recent critiques of the concept of religion, I believe that the concept of religion can be refined and critically appropriated. If the term "religion" is not used to discriminate or to privilege any tradition, then it can be useful, at least to facilitate cross-cultural comparison and understanding. It is obvious to claim that Buddhism is not a religion in the theistic sense of the word, but it is also true that there are other concepts of religion that can be applied to Buddhism.

Although I prefer not to give students a definition of religion, I teach that religions usually contain theoretical and practical dimensions mediated by social institutions and "texts," be they oral traditions or scriptures. Such beliefs and practices mediated by "texts" and social institutions help people to relate to, achieve or realize whatever they deem "most important." I emphasize that religions have to do with the most important, and that whatever becomes the most important in your life, that has become your religion, be it wealth, work, God/s, the Dharma, salvation, liberation, happiness, holiness, the spiritual path, and so on.

The aforementioned concept of religion as that which relates to the most important does not favor any particular tradition, and it does not assume anything about the nature of the most important. This concept of religion only presupposes that something functions as the most important in people's lives, and that people do and belief various things that function as means to better relate to, achieve, or realize that which they perceive as the most important.

Unlike the theistic definition of religion, the "most important" concept of religion can be applied to Buddhism. That is, unlike the theistic definition of religion, the concept of religion as that which relates to the most important does not exclude Buddhism from the field of World Religions, and it does not privilege Christianity as the only religion that fits nicely into the concept of religion.

Some students, very few, do not have a problem with the theistic definition of religion. For them, like for Harris and Batchelor, the solution is simple: Buddhism is not a religion. Rather, Buddhism, they claim, is a psychological philosophy or a way of life. In response, I explain that the non-religious interpretation of Buddhism originated in Europe during the nineteenth century, when our knowledge of living Buddhism was very limited and based primarily on textual sources in Sanskrit and Pāli. However, I say to them, today we know much more about the social role Buddhism perform in many countries. Even if Buddhism is different from other religions in its rational outlook and critical attitude towards God/s and the soul, it remains the case that, at least sociologically, Buddhism functions as any other religion. There are Buddhist rituals, monks, nuns, canonical texts, pilgrimages, temples, monasteries, and devotional attitudes towards the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha.

Harris and Batchelor are not the first ones to contend that Buddhism is not a religion. In fact, such view of Buddhism was used in the nineteenth century by both Christian missionaries and Buddhist apologists, albeit with two distinct agendas. Buddhist apologists were interested in contrasting the scientific nature of Buddhism with the superstitious and irrational nature of all the other religions, especially, Christianity. Christian missionaries, on the other hand, wanted to show that Buddhism was not worthy it of the term religion, and therefore, that it should not be studied by the then emerging History of Religions.

It should be noticed that Harris and Batchelor have a different agenda. By claiming that Buddhism is not a religion, Harris and Batchelor do not seem to be interested in undermining Christianity and idealizing Buddhism. Rather, they seem to be interested in secularizing Buddhism and depriving it of its rituals, monastic institutions, and devotional attitudes. In other words, both Harris and Batchelor share a rationalistic, philosophical understanding of Buddhism.

The interpretations developed by Sam Harris and Martin Batchelor are similar in that both present the Buddha as a philosopher whose main teachings have been neglected and transformed into the religion we called Buddhism. While the Buddha was a secular atheist primarily concerned with eradicating suffering in this world, most Buddhists are polytheists in practice, and mainly concerned with securing a happy existence after death.

Both Harris and Batchelor distinguish between the Buddha's teachings and Buddhism. Buddhism is presented as a religion that involves superstitious and ritualistic petitions to supernatural beings e.g., gods and spirits, as well as beliefs in metaphysical concepts such as karma, rebirth, and *saṃsāra*. In contrast, the Buddha's teachings are a rational system of ethics and meditation that does not require believing anything on insufficient evidence (Harris); the Buddha's teachings are not intended to establish a religion among others but rather a pragmatic and therapeutic way of life conducive to a new civilization or culture of awakening (Batchelor).

Yet another similarity is that Harris and Batchelor consider current Buddhism an obstacle. In the case of Harris, Buddhism hinders the development of a contemplative science, and for Batchelor a civilization of awakening. Batchelor's position is more moderate than Harris's, who goes as far as to suggest that students of the Buddha should "kill" Buddhism. Batchelor only advocates a secular and individualized form of Buddhism, i.e., collage Buddhism, which is in principle compatible with the existence of traditional Buddhist orthodoxies and institutions.

After clarifying that the agenda behind Harris and Batchelor is substantially different from the agenda of nineteenth century Buddhist apologists and Christian missionaries, I ask students to think about who benefits from saying that Buddhism is not a religion. What is gained by presenting Buddhism as a secular philosophy or way of life? What does such interpretation do to living Buddhist traditions?

I get a variety of answers. Some students reply that Buddhism needs to adapt to present needs, and that losing its religious baggage is the price to pay in order to make Buddhism more palatable to Westerners. Other students are afraid that such presentations will transform Buddhism into a commodity, another object of consumption for spiritual seekers unsatisfied with organized religions. Yet other students agree with Harris in believing that Buddhism need to disappear so that the true practice of the Dharma can flourish in Western countries.

Most students, however, agree in that presenting Buddhism as a mere secular and psychological philosophy or way of life does not do justice to the social reality of Buddhism. Affirming that Buddhism is just a philosophy or a way of life is quite simplistic. All religions presuppose philosophical claims, and most religions contain several schools of thought. Even if Buddhism were reducible to just a philosophy, it would be necessary to clarify what kind of philosophy it is. Is such a philosophy the same thing as the Abhidharma of the Theravāda or the Sarvāstivāda schools? Or is it what Nāgārjuna and other Buddhist thinkers taught? Similarly,

all religions can accommodate various ways of life. Saying that Buddhism is a way of life does not specify which one among the many possible ways of life compatible with Buddhism is the one that all Buddhists must observe. Is it the monastic way of life the ideal or rather the lay person way of life? Is the Buddhist way of life compatible with living within globalized pluralistic societies or is the Buddhist way of life only possible by residing in remote monasteries in the jungle and mountains?

Besides being simplistic and doing injustice to the complex reality of living Buddhist traditions, defining Buddhism as a psychological philosophy or way of life endangers Buddhist identity. Most of my students understand that Buddhism emphasizes meditation and psychological ethics. However, they do not think that beliefs in gods, spirits, and the supernatural acts of bodhisattvas can be extricated from Buddhism without affecting its traditional identity. Similarly, my students find hard to envision a form of Buddhism that does not believe in karma, rebirth, and saṃsāra.

Yet Harris and Batchelor would like to purge the Buddha's teachings from the aforementioned beliefs, which for them are irrational in the sense of being based on insufficient evidence. For them, accepting the existence of superhuman agents such as gods and spirits, and believing in metaphysical concepts such karma, rebirth, and saṃsāra is characteristic of religions. Similarly, for Harris and Batchelor, performing rituals that express devotion to Buddhas and his disciples, i.e., monks, as well as requesting favors from the Buddha and celestial bodhisattvas is part of Buddhism, not an intrinsic part of the Buddha's teachings.

While I do not deny that the Buddha's core teachings can be practiced without having to believe anything on insufficient evidence, I fail to see how someone can practice the Buddhist path without believing in karma and rebirth. Yet, I teach my students, karma and rebirth need not be understood as metaphysical concepts. Everybody can experience that evil actions tend to lead to evil consequences, and that good actions usually lead to positive results. The concept of karma, I teach, does not presuppose a mysterious metaphysical quality of actions, it only describes what most people experience when performing certain actions. Similarly, the concept of rebirth need not be understood as a metaphysical belief that can never be proved or disproved. In fact, I tell my students, there is substantial empirical evidence that seems to support the belief in rebirth. Such evidence has been scientifically investigated by the late professor Ian Stevenson at the University of Virginia.

Thus, I find academically questionable to claim as Batchelor does that the beliefs in karma and rebirth are not an intrinsic part of the Buddha's teaching. I also find academically questionable to suggest, as both Harris and Batchelor do, that all religious beliefs including karma and rebirth are irrational. While it may be true that many religious beliefs are irrational and based on faith, this is not necessarily so, especially in the case of the Buddha and Buddhism. Needless to say, my point is not that all Buddhist teachings are rational and scientific while the teachings of other religions are not. Rather, my point is that we cannot generalize and contend that any religious belief whatsoever must be metaphysical, irrational and based on faith as Harris and Batchelor seem to assume. There are many religions and many types of religious beliefs. Likewise, there are other kinds of faith besides irrational faith, and not all expressions of religious faith are irrational and incompatible with science.

Regarding the atheist interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism, after living in the Bible belt for five years, I have realized there is an urgent need to clarify what the Buddha of the *Pāli Nikāyas* says about the question of God. Can we apply the concept of God to Buddhism? Did

the Buddha believe in God? What concepts of God were rejected by the Buddha? Can we consider the concepts of Dhamma and Nibbāna as analogues to the concept of God, as functionally equivalent, or as having nothing to do with such concept even with non-theistic understandings of God?

My experience teaching Buddhism in the Bible belt is that using the terms "atheism" and "non-theism" is misleading and counterproductive for a variety of reasons. The categories "non-theism" and "atheism" are unhelpful to understand Buddhism in his own terms. In order to illustrate this point, I ask students to tell me what their favorite sport is. Some say basketball, others football, others baseball. Then I explain that I am originally from Spain and that I love soccer, which for me, I exaggerate a little bit here, is the greatest and most powerful sport on earth. In my worldview, I continue exaggerating, people can be divided into two categories: those who love soccer and those who do not. Therefore, I label "non-soccer fans" all those who do not consider soccer the greatest and most powerful sport on earth.

I ask students whether they are comfortable being labeled "non-soccer" fans despite of the fact that for them soccer is not the greatest and most powerful sport on earth. They agree that such characterization is problematic because it defines them, not in their own terms but rather in terms of soccer. Well, I say, that is precisely what happens when we define Buddhism as a non-theistic religion. Instead of understanding Buddhism in its own terms, we understand it in terms of theism.

What is wrong with defining Buddhism in terms of theism as "a non-theistic religion"? Exactly the same thing as describing basketball, football, baseball fans in terms of soccer as "non-soccer fans." We fail to understand Buddhism and other sports in their own terms. We understand Buddhism from the perspective of theistic religions, and fans of other sports from the perspective of "soccer fans."

Besides failing to understanding Buddhism in its own terms, using the terms "non-theism" or "atheism" gives the false impression that for Buddhists the question of God is a primary concern. In fact, the question of God, at least in the Pāli Nikāyas, is open to several interpretations, and only remotely related to the central question of suffering and its cessation. It is true that Buddhism is a non-theistic religion. However, it is not true that what defines Buddhism is its lack of interest in the theistic concept of God. Buddhism is not about affirming or denying the existence of God in the theistic sense. Rather as the *Dhammapada* states, the teachings of Buddhas is about avoiding what is evil, doing what is good and cultivating the mind (Dhp, 183).

The primary concern of the Buddha is not the problem of God but rather the problem of suffering. Describing the Buddha's teachings as "non-theistic" misses the point of the Dhamma, which, as the simile of the rafts indicates, is to cross over from the shore of suffering to the other shore of ultimate happiness (MN.I.134-5). That is, the truth of the Dhamma has to do with the specific conditionality and the dependent origination of suffering (MN.I.167). The Buddha himself claims in (MN.I.140) that "Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering" (*Pubbe cāhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ*).

Thus, describing Buddhism and the Buddha's teachings as "non-theistic" loses the pragmatic and therapeutic focus of the Dhamma. The non-theistic interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism unavoidably shift the emphasis from the urgent and immediate question of suffering to the speculative and metaphysical question of God.

The problem worsens with the atheist interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism. In order to illustrate this point, I continue with the comparison of Buddhism and soccer. Once my students realize that the labels we use to describe religions matter, and once they see why the concept of "non-theism" should not be applied to Buddhism, I ask them to think about the term "atheism."

Well, I say, you refuse to be described as "non-soccer fans" because soccer is not that important to you, and you believe that you deserve to be defined, not in terms of soccer but rather in terms of what really matters to you, whether basketball, football, or baseball. Now, let us pretend that my way of thinking about sports is binary: people are either in favor or against soccer, either they love it or hate it. It does not matter that you do not care much about soccer, and that your position is neither against nor in favor of soccer. For me, hypothetically speaking, if you do not love soccer, and if you refuse to be labeled "non-soccer fans," I cannot but conclude that you dislike soccer. Since you do not care about soccer, and since you do not want to be considered "non-soccer fans," you must hate soccer because for me there are no other options between loving and hating soccer, between being in favor or against soccer. Therefore, for me, you may be "non-soccer fans" in theory but in actual practice you are "anti-soccer" because you do not support soccer.

Students acknowledge right away that there is something wrong with my binary way of thinking and the mutually exclusive categories it presupposes. It is just bad thinking, it is not accurate to describe them as "anti-soccer" simply because they object to being called "non-soccer fans." All of my students agree that it does not make sense to argue in that way. From not caring much about soccer, and from refusing to be labeled "non-soccer fans," it does not follow that they are against soccer.

I extrapolate the aforementioned way of thinking about soccer to the question of God and Buddhism. Similarly, if Buddhists do not like to be defined as non-theistic, and if they do not care much about the theistic concept of God, then they must be atheists. Again I explain, this hypothetical way of thinking is defective because from not considering the theistic concept of God the most important, it does not follow that Buddhists are atheists.

Then, I clarify that such binary way of thinking is not uncommon among fundamentalists. For instance, for many Christians in the Bible belt there are only two options: theism and non-theism, believers and unbelievers, black or white, yes or no. Either people believe in God or they do not, either they believe in Jesus as the only begotten son of God or they do not. Many of them even quote the Bible to support their binary way of thinking: "He who is not with me is against me" (Mathew 12:30). Therefore, for Christians with a binary way of thinking, if Buddhism does not consider the theistic concept of God the greatest and most powerful reality in the universe, then, they conclude, Buddhism must be against God, and it is nothing but a more subtle form of atheism.

The atheist interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism contributes to this misrepresentation of the Buddhist position. It is true that Harris and Batchelor distinguish between Western atheism, which is more militant, and Buddhist atheism. This distinction, however, is not likely to be understood by those who apply a binary way of thinking to religions and the question of God. Since there are many people in the Bible belt who think in binary terms about religions and God, speaking about the Buddha and Buddhism in terms of atheism is not only misleading but also counterproductive.

In the United States, especially in the Bible belt, the concept of atheism is loaded with negative connotations. For many of my students, being an atheist amounts to being immoral and without a purpose in life. The assumption is that only God can provide a solid foundation for ethical conduct. Therefore, if Buddhism is portrayed a religion without God or as atheist in some way, many students automatically lose interest in studying whatever the Buddha or Buddhists have to say. These students, a minority to be fair, conclude beforehand that Buddhism and the Buddha are not worthy it of study because for them nothing good can come out of atheism or any atheist tradition. That is, the atheist interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism discourages many Christians from studying the Dhamma seriously and with an open mind.

Yet another negative consequence of defining the Buddha and Buddhism in terms of "non-theism" or "atheism" is that it drags Buddhists into the cultural wars currently being fought across the USA between fundamentalist Christians and atheists. Fundamentalists Christians interpret the Bible literally, and see themselves as being under attack by what they perceive as the prevalent secular and liberal culture. On the opposite camp, there are those perceive science and reason under attack. Those who oppose Christian attempts to teach intelligent design alongside the theory of evolution are not necessarily atheists. However, fundamentalists do not distinguish between atheists who interpret religion as irrational and dangerous, and other more moderate positions that just would like the separation between church and state or between science and religion to be respected. Presenting the Buddha and Buddhism in atheist terms antagonizes Christian fundamentalists and leads many people to believe that Buddhists, like atheists, are against God, religion, and faith, which is not necessarily the case.

The confrontational attitudes behind religious fundamentalists and new atheists have little, if anything to do with the Buddha's teachings. Science and religion need not be enemies. Religious people need not be ignorant and violent. Likewise, scientists and rational people need not be atheists and against religion. Yet, if someone listens to the new atheists, one cannot help but to think that religion is irrational, and that science demonstrates the truth of atheism.

Would the Buddha take part in the cultural wars between theism and atheism, science and religion, reason and faith? Would the Buddha try to clarify the meaning of each term, and show that there is a middle way between binary ways of thinking? Would the Buddha avoid the two extremes of the debate and focus on the problem of suffering? While we cannot say for sure what the Buddha would do if he had to teach the Dhamma in the Bible belt, I think it is safe to guess that he would not like to be involved in heated and endless disputes conducive to anger, frustration, and other negative mental states.

In order to avoid all the negative consequences of presenting the Buddha and Buddhism as "non-theistic" and "atheistic," I encourage students to realize that current debates between theists and atheists are foreign to most Buddhist texts. I also invite students to overcome binary ways of thinking about God and religion. The dilemma either theism or atheism is a false dilemma because it does not exhaust all possible ways of thinking about God. In other words, I teach students that the concept of God is broader than the theistic understanding of God.

Another important point I try to underscore while teaching the Dhamma in the Bible belt is that the core teachings of the Buddha and Buddhism need not be in contradiction with either theism or atheism. That is, Buddhism does not fit neatly into either side of the debate between

fundamentalist Christians and atheists. I do not go as far as to teach that Buddhists believe in a non-theistic concept of God, but I do point out that the concepts of Dhamma and Nibbāna may contribute to a better and deeper understanding of what the concept of God may signify.

Unlike the atheist interpretation of the Buddha and Buddhism, I try to teach the Dhamma in the Bible belt without taking sides either in favor or against theism. This "middle way" approach has the advantage of not antagonizing anybody, be they Christians, secular atheists or agnostics. This "middle way" approach facilitates the study of the Dhamma from different ideological standpoints.

Another advantage of this "middle way" approach to teaching the Dhamma is that the Buddha and Buddhists are not unnecessarily dragged into cultural wars foreign to them. By avoiding the dilemma either theism or non-theism/atheism, students are able to understand better the pragmatic and non-confrontational attitude of the Buddha and most Buddhist. That is, setting aside the debate theism versus atheism helps students to understand the main concern of Buddha and Buddhism, which is not the affirmation or denial of God/s, but rather the mind and the suffering generated by unwholesome mental states.

In conclusion, although the atheist understanding of the Buddha and Buddhism is psychologically sophisticated and probably appealing to secular humanists suspicious of "religion" and convinced that science provides the only valid means of knowledge, it is highly misleading and counterproductive to teach the Dhamma in predominantly Christian lands.

Exporting Dharma to New Lands: Empirical Approaches of Teaching Dharma in Predominantly Non-Buddhist States

Saw Yee Mon
Reader in Buddhism

Introduction

Muttāhaṃ, bhikkhave, sabbapāsehi, yedibbā ye ca mānusā.

Tumhepi, bhikkhave, muttā sabbapāsehi, ye dibbā ye ca mānusā.

Caratha, bhikkhave, cārikaṃ bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya

Lokānukampāya atthaya hitaya sukāya devamanussānaṃ.[1]

This verse is expounded by Buddha to sixty of his *ariyā* disciples after a year of his buddha-hood, while residing at Mighadāvuṃ forest, almost two thousand-six hundred years ago. According to this, Buddha urged his disciples to make journeys in order to disseminate dharma for the benefit of all the sentient beings including humans, deities and brahmās. It was the very first mission assigned by Buddha to his *ariya sānghā*. Throughout two and a half millenniums, dharma has been taught and learned by Buddhists from generations to generations.

In this paper, three particular approaches for teaching dharma are explored and discussed in accordance with the Pāli Texts. The emphasis is made on teaching dharma in new lands where Buddhism is never known or little known.

The Need to Export Teachings of Buddha

In simple economic term, we export goods and services to other regions and countries in order to gain income in return. Regarding the export of teachings of Buddha, what can we expect in return? The return is greater than we can imagine. In simplest way, it reduces stress, tension and anxiety of every individual. This has ripple effect and as an accumulated output of this, society as a whole may become less aggressive and more peaceful which tends to be the ultimate goal of the present day global society which is more or less in turmoil.

Again, in terms of wealth, wealth can be classified into human-wealth and non-human wealth.[2] Human wealth refers to aptitude and attitude of human beings whereas non-human wealth refers to capital stock. Both type of wealth can be income-generating, however, only the human wealth which is endowed with dharma can generate peace and harmony. It will also be the determinant of self-sustained growth.

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[1] Vin. III, Myanmar Version, page 27-78

[2] Lim Chong Yah (1996), Singapore Economic Review, Vol.V, No.2

We cannot deny the fact that socio-economic system across the globe produces many tensions in people's life. With dharma we will be able to make intelligent choices without fear. Moreover, Dharma is adaptable and inclusive. That is why we should not be confined dharma or the Teachings of Buddha to ourselves, the Buddhists. It is needed to be spread as far as it can reach. Thus, we inevitably need to export dharma.

Defining What to Export

From the very first mission, Buddha stressed the importance of disseminating dharma on the grounds that apart from all its benefits and advantages towards the sentient beings, Buddhist Teachings have auspicious qualities from the beginning to the middle until the end. They are also flawless in meaning and in grammar. We can say that it is also an explicit practical guideline in formulating social ethics to address the never ending human problems.[3]

Therefore, when defining what or which part of dharma to be exported, we should not miss the essence. All the Teachings of Buddha are grouped into Tri Pitaka- the three baskets. The Pāli word, *Buddhasāsanā*, means Teachings of Buddha. The essence of *Buddhasāsanā* is *sīla, samādhi* and *pāññā*. For *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration) and *pāññā* (wisdom) – the buddha taught *Vinaya, Suttānda* and *Abhidhamma*.

Sīla is expounded and explained through *Vinaya* where as *samādhi* is expounded and explained through *Suttānda* and likewise *pāññā* is expounded and explained through *Abhidhamma*. Thus it is very clear that when disseminating *Buddhasāsanā* or the Teachings of Buddha, there should be no exclusion, but to teach all *sīla, samādhi* and *pāññā* through teaching of *Vinaya, Suttānda* and *Abhidhamma*.

Agents and Recipients

In order to export the Teachings of Buddha to new lands as well as to non-Buddhist states, first we need exporters or the disseminators of dharma. In this paper, the disseminators of dharma are referred to as 'Agents'. As the knowledge of *sīla, samādhi* and *pāññā* needs to be disseminated, the role of agents is important. Agents can be Buddhist monks (*bhikkhus*), nuns (*bhikkhunis*), laymen and lay women. In Buddhism, there is no restriction that only those who are in Buddhist Order, that is, monks and nuns can teach the dharma nor is there such gender discrimination like only males are allowed to teach dharma. That is why in Myanmar history, it has witnessed that a royal princess by the name of Ma Soe Min taught dharma to many scholar monks in the royal court of 11th century Bagan Dynasty. She was also known as Than Byin Princess and was a famous figure in history. She was the chief instructor of dharma at the court not because she was a princess but because of her intellectual skills and solid knowledge in dharma.

Regarding the recipients, they refer to both Buddhists and non-Buddhist people in new lands as well as in non-Buddhist states.

[3] Facing the future: A Buddhist Social Ethic for the New Century, Bhikku Bodhi, pg. 3

Approaches for Teaching Dharma

Agents must be aware of the certain fact that they are going to deliver their message to the recipients with totally different mindset and belief system. Even for people who claim themselves Buddhists in the non-Buddhist states, they have the potential to have different way of thinking and judgment from that of people from Theravāda Buddhist countries. Thus, we need to clarify our approaches in a manner which most appropriately suit the situations and circumstances. The followings are some suggested approaches:

1. The Use of Two Dimensional Tools
2. Never Let the Language Barrier Block the Way
3. Agent as Ideal Person & a Kalyāṇamitta

The Use of Two Dimensional Tools

As mentioned before, the agents can be both monks and nuns in Buddhist Order or the lay people who are Buddhist devotees. These agents need certain tools to transfer what they have learned to the recipients. The two most important tools are *karunā* and *pāññā*. All the above mentioned agents can and must cultivate these two dimensions of attribute in them once they have decided to act as agents. The Buddha himself cultivated *karunā* and *pāññā* to the highest level in him above all others in the universe. In other words, these tools are invincible armors against all obstacles of relative world. The mind of Buddha was ultimately purified by his greatness in *karunā* and *pāññā.* Whenever Buddha taught the beings, He spread *karunā* towards each being and used *pāññā* to gauge their *anusaya*[4] so that Buddha knew which discourse to deliver according to each individual's *anusaya* in order to enlighten that person. In the light of this, agents who teach a way to purify minds need to develop as much compassion- *karunā* and wisdom- *pāññā* as they are capable of.

Compassion, *karunā* is one of the four characteristics of *Brahmacariya*. When an agent is successful in cultivating compassion to a certain level, it becomes easier for the agent to cultivate loving-kindness, *mettā*. Again if an agent has developed a successful level of wisdom, *pāññā,* it is easier for the agent to cultivate equanimity, *upakkā*.

As an empirical success story, the following is how a Myanmar monk named Ashin[5] Ottama, very famous for his higher state of compassion, exported dharma to northern part of Myanmar where Buddhism was unknown before his time.

Ashin Ottama was born in 1910 in middle part of Myanmar. He was ordained at the age of nineteen. He started his missionary works since the British colonial era. At that time, Buddhist monks were not allowed to travel northern part of Myanmar as missionary because the colonial government encouraged Christian missionaries to do their missionary work at the remote and hilly regions of Myanmar. If a Buddhist monk was found by the colonial government authority there, the monk would be arrested. In such kind of situation, Ashin Ottama took the risk to disseminate the Teachings of Buddha in the hilly regions of the North after the World War II. He travelled on foot crossing the Rakhine Yoma mountain ranges. Then he decided to stay on the mountain, 7000 feet above the sea level.

[4] Anusaya = The ability to know level of intelligence of each being

[5] Ashin = Bhikkhu

There the natives were ethnic tribal races. The majority of these people belonged to ethnic race called Chin. They had their own spoken language but it did not have written form. Thus, the British created written language for them by using English alphabets. At that time, the natives there were illiterate and they worshipped spirits, except some of them were converted into Christianity by the western missionaries. Ashin Ottama had a great compassion for these people and thus he decided to disseminate dharma there. First, the natives did not accept him and they regarded him as an evil because his head was shaved, he wore robe and carried alms bowl which they had never seen before. They were hostile to him and even tried to harm him. However, Ashin Ottama had mastered *mettā Bhavanā.* He constantly radiated loving kindness, *mettā* towards all the beings. This again is a result of possessing a higher level of compassion and had developed wisdom in him. Those who have compassion, *karunā* are easier to develop *mettā* and are also able to effectively radiate *mettā* to the beings.

His contemplation of *Mettā Bhavanā* was very strong and persistent that eventually the natives started to change their attitude towards him. Some of them offered him food and some repaired his little hut to be stronger and warmer. Because Ashin Ottama radiated *mettā* and *karunā* to all beings, wild animals did not harm him as well. He was completely protected from men and beasts because of his *mettā* and *karunā* towards all beings. Natives were surprised to see that even wild animals did not harm him but pay respect to him when they approached his hut. Eventually, these people came to him for healing of their wounds and to cure different kinds of illnesses. Ashin Ottama cured all the patients just by contemplating *Mettā Bhavanā*.

When he recited *Metta Sutta* , bubbles come out of water in glass or cup or any kind of container. This water cured certain illness and released pain. Sometimes, they asked him for simple thing like weather forecasting, and Ashin Ottama always gave them very précised forecasting which was valuable for the farmers and hunters. This is not because he had possessed some kind of supernatural power, but because he was highly literate in Buddhist literature, he was very knowledgeable and he was endowed with wisdom. The villagers thought Ashin Ottama was more powerful than their gods and spirits they worshipped. Thus the natives came to believe in him and devoted him. They listened to him and the dharma he taught them. Their lives became more meaningful and more peaceful. They could change themselves from superstitious, primitive people to open-minded, adaptable people who came to believe in the Law of *Kāmma*.

When analyzing Ashin Ottama's missionary work, first he gave the impression to the natives that he was harmless. The next impression he gave was that he was reliable and he cared for the welfare of these native people. And finally, he could deliver the message which was the objective of his mission. In fact, this kind of mission, living at a place where people speak different language with different belief system and where one is prone to be alienated with full of hostility, is almost impossible for an ordinary agent. However, in the case of Ashin Ottama, he set an example for future agents that with genuine and perfectly practiced *karunā* which is accompanied by *pāññā,* it is possible to make a success in disseminating the Teachings of Buddha to the new lands. Thus agents are highly advised to develop *karunā* and *pāññā* which are essential tools in teaching dharma.

Never Let the Language Barrier Block the Way

Another issue to be seriously taken into account by agents is the language barrier. The Teachings of Buddha are originally in the Pāli texts. Pāli is a language without written forms and each Buddhist country uses their own characters and alphabets for written expressions. Here, translation is pivotal. A very minor divergent in meaning can lead to totally different concept or explanation. Again, mastering the language of both Pāli and recipients' language is crucial.

In Myanmar, Ashin Thittila, a renowned Buddhist monk of 20th century, was a very reliable example who tried extraordinarily hard and conquered the language barrier in teaching and exporting Dharma to the West. Ashin Thittila was born in 1896 and was ordained in 1915. At that time, Myanmar was still under the British ruling. Although English was used as office language, majority of natives were against learning English purely out of patriotism. This was most prominent in Buddhist community. The elder Theravāda Buddhist monks condemned learning of English and so did their patrons. Ashin Thittila had a strong ambition to propagate Buddhism in the world which was full of aggression and anxiety. In order to fulfill his ambition, he was well aware of the need to master the language which was commonly spoken in the western world that is English. Thus, against all odds, he started learning English. He learned English in Myanmar, India and Sri Lanka. Moreover, since he was an expert in Pāli, it was easier for him to learn the grammar of English language. With great effort, *vīriya* and strong will, *saddā* he finally achieved his goal in a short period of time.

His first journey to the West was in 1938. He went to England and stayed in London. It was just before the outbreak of World War II. He endured all the hardships there. When the War broke out, he did not go back to his country although many friends and colleagues insisted him and this was because he thought he hadn't even started to accomplish his mission. During the War, he stayed at his friend catholic priest's estate in Summerset. While residing there, he volunteered to do 'black out' which was to put out lights at night to avoid exposure to the bombers. He also volunteered as a first-aid nurse to take care of casualties and victims of bombings in London. Amidst the hardships where all the situations were very irrelevant for the livelihood of a Buddhist monk who also needed to comply with *vinaya,* Ashin Thittila survived and started to launch his Buddhist missionary works.

In order to teach Buddhism, agent needs to master Pāli first. If the recipients' language and the agent's language are the same, then there is not much effort needed for the agent in teaching the dharma, except to be careful with the Pāli translation. However, if the agent and the recipients do not share the same language, then it is a must for the agent to master the language of the recipients which would be second tongue for him or her. It is suggested that agent should master at least 70% of both Pāli and the recipients' language. In the case of Ashin Thittla, he firmly believed that he needed to master English and as a result of his hard work, he could break the big barrier. He organized group discussions and weekly public lectures. Then he became meditation instructor. His lectures and his instructions were very clear, precise and easily understandable by the English native speakers that the recipients keep on attending the sessions with increasing number of attendees every week. His British landlady called him 'Uneducated Easterner'. She always commented that there was nothing new for westerners to learn from the easterner like Ashin Thittila. However, once she saw even famous academics started to attend his lectures, she stopped calling him 'Uneducated Easterner'. He was a monk who learned and knew very well about the mindset of 20th century western people. He believed in the fact that Buddhist way is not to convert, but to raise the consciousness of others by our own deeds.

Ashin Thittila started giving a course on Abhidhamma in 1948 and conducted exam in 1949. He made such abstract and metaphysical topics very interesting by his skills in language. Among the candidates who entered the Abhidhamma exams, many of them passed with distinctions and those who passed were awarded certificates. He encouraged his students to learn synonyms for each Buddhist terminology and technical terms to help them make it easier to learn and understand.

He annulled the Westerners' point of view on Buddhism that 'Buddhism is pessimistic' and was successful in convincing them that 'Buddhism is optimistic' through his lectures and dharma talks. This is one of his major achievements. He was always very careful in translation and careful study of his works shows that he avoided personal ideas when translating the Pāli words. This is another issue on which agents need to pay much attention. Sometimes, when we focus much on the relevancy between the message we want to instill and the recipients' situation, we try to formulate that would suit the situation and there is a tendency of divergence from the original meaning. As Theravādans, throughout these 2600 years, we have never added, subtracted or made changes to the Teachings of Buddha. Thus we need to keep this tradition and should be cautious about this. As for Ashin Thittila, he firmly aware of this and it is reflected in his lectures and his writings. He had written and translated many famous and best selling books on Buddhism such as The Book of Analysis, The Path of the Buddha, The Buddha and Personal Life, Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures and many more.

He passed away in 1997 at the age of 101, but his writings and lectures have been quoted and referred to by many scholars and writers of Buddhism in East and West. He had himself a good example for the agents who wish to disseminate dharma in the West without language barrier.

Agent as Ideal Person & a Kalyāṇamitta

It would be advisable for the agents to set themselves as role-models or ideal persons to be more effective in disseminating dharma. Agents do not need to take much trouble in formulating the principles which would make them role- models because these principles are already mentioned in the Pāli Texts. The most basic and simplest principle is to fully observe the Five Precepts in the case of layman agents. This is the number one step and all the layman agents should not overlook it. Among many rules and principles for monks, one notable set of principles is described in Pāli Text- *Āvāsikasuttaṃ*[6] They are known as Characteristics of Abbot. In simple English, they are:

1. To have pleasant appearance
2. To be knowledgeable
3. To be able to live secular life
4. To speak politely with consideration
5. To be wise

Although these characteristics are originally meant for monks, especially abbots in this case, however, layman agents can also adopt these characteristics. By so doing, they can be role models for their recipients.

The ideal placed by the Buddha before us is mutual service men being in need of each other- to help each other. In Pāli Text, *Nikāya* there are three modes of conduct for the Buddhists

[6] AN II , Myanmar version, pg.228

namely *Buddhattha Cariyā* (striving for Buddhahood), *Ňātattha Cariyā* (working for the benefit of one's relatives), and *Lokattha Cariyā* (working for the benefit of the whole world). Likewise, each of us has three modes of conduct. The first one is *Atta Cariyā* which means striving for self-development so that one may attain happiness, self-culture and self-realization. The second mode of conduct is *Ňātattha Cariyā* which stands for working for the benefit of one's relatives and friends. The third mode that is to be observed is *Lokattha Cariyā* which means to work for the benefit of the whole world without any discrimination like caste, color or creed. Buddha asked us to practice these principles to refine our own nature and to elevate ourselves on the scale of being.[7] These modes directly reflect the aptitude and attitude of an agent and these reflections create greater impression on the recipients.

Another aspect that the agents are advised to bear in mind is that they should be *Kalyāṇamitta* for the recipients. *Kalyāṇamitta* represents a genuine and reliable friend who considers and acts only for the benefit of his or her friend. Agents should think, speak and act for the good of their recipients. Those agents who help their recipients to be able to reach on the right track, that is the Noble Eight-fold Path, are the *Kalyāṇamitta* of their recipients and also that of their surroundings. Here, we should note that there is always a ripple effect.

When Ānāndā made a statement that having a *Kalyāṇamitta* meant a person has 50% achieved his aim to attain *Nibāna*, the Buddha responded that in fact having a *Kalyāṇamitta* meant the person has 100% achieved. With a support of *Kalyāṇamitta,* a person can achieve his aim to attain *Nibāna*. Buddha claimed himself as a *Kalyāṇamitta* for all beings. This indicates the importance of the role of *Kalyāṇamitta* and thus agents should not over look this in building themselves as ideal person when disseminating dharma.

Concluding Remarks

This paper does not attempt to replace the present-day's widely accepted methodologies of teaching Buddhism in new lands and non-Buddhist states. It solely aims to highlight the methods which are already mentioned in the Buddhist texts, but are prone to be overlooked by many scholars and disseminators of Buddhism lately. This re-exploration of specific means of teaching dharma hopes to add more flavors in improving the efficiency of the existing system in disseminating the Teachings of Buddha and helping people to make their lives better.

[7] Ashin Thittla (1992), Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures, DRA Press, pg.86

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The Dhamma in Spanish-Speaking Countries

Alina Morales Troncoso[1]

In this paper I intend to explore the different ways in which the Dhamma is taking roots in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries and becoming a way of life for many people who live in conservative societies where the predominant religion most of the time remains unchallenged in its tenets.

Buddhism has a lot to offer to the Spanish-speaking societies from the standpoint of ethics, psychology and mental well-being, but the way Buddhism has been introduced in these countries rarely has given these things the importance they deserve. On the contrary, it is the different cultural and ritualistic aspects of Buddhism that sometimes take precedence over the teaching of ethics and psychology and mental well-being.

From the time I met Buddhism what I have seen is that the Mahayana traditions, that is, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, have more acceptance and followers than Theravada Buddhism. Something that has to do with this preference is the misinformation or lack of adequate knowledge about the Theravada tradition. Generally speaking those who inform others about the Theravada tradition are persons who have superficial knowledge of it and they attribute things to it that do not reflect what it really is.

In the Spanish-speaking countries –unlike the United States or Canada where Buddhist immigrants have played an important role in the development of Buddhism– Buddhism is taking roots without the support of a Buddhist community of immigrants. In a certain way the Spanish-speaking countries are unique in the modern history of Buddhism because of this peculiarity.

The way to bring Buddhism to a new level in these societies would be through the establishment of educational and academic institutions which would offer an unbiased approach to the teachings of the Buddha of the three main branches, Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. I believe that right now is the moment, it is the opportunity, in our societies, to devote effort and resources towards establishing Buddhism in a way that people can relate without the cultural and ethnic trappings.

In the following pages I will discuss the results of the research I have done with practitioners of the different traditions in Latin America and Spain.

This research was motivated by the fact that in my country, Mexico, there are various Buddhist groups of different denominations. I had the opportunity to meet individuals belonging to most of these groups. And one often finds that each of these groups claim that they represent the true teachings of the Buddha. Coming from the Theravada tradition myself and knowing that the Pali Canon represents, if not the Buddha's word itself, the oldest extant record of what the Buddha taught, I often wonder why those belonging to other traditions do not come to our tradition for

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the original source of their teachings. I have pondered again and again over this matter, and I have come to the conclusion that it is because of the lack of information about what the Buddha taught.

Let me state from the beginning that Mexico is the country with the highest number of Buddhist groups in the Spanish-speaking world. I think there are two main reasons for this. Number one, its closeness to the United States of America, which is one of the countries with the highest number of Buddhists in the West. Number two, Mexico is the largest country population wise of the Spanish-speaking countries. There are over 110 million Mexicans plus about more than 50 million inside the United States.[2]

There are many Buddhist groups of different denominations in Mexico, most of them belonging to the Zen and Tibetan traditions. Since I have belonged to the Theravada school for 14 years, over time I developed some interest in knowing how Buddhists from other traditions perceived my own tradition. And the opposite too: how my fellows perceived the other traditions. Therefore I approached people that have an appreciation and respect for both modalities of the teachings, Mahayana and Theravada. I wanted to find out what people, belonging to one of the main traditions, thought of the other and vice versa. In this way, I surmised, I could find some common ground in this cross-referencing.

For that purpose I prepared a questionnaire with a number of relevant questions to explore how people perceived the establishment of Buddhism in their countries.

I handed over this questionnaire to different Buddhist practitioners of South America, Spain and Mexico. I think these three groups of people represent a reliable sample of what is available right now. Let me mention that those who answered the questionnaire are highly educated students of Buddhism, whose answers, I think, provide an insight in the trends of the Buddha's teaching in this Spanish-speaking world.

The first two questions I asked have to do with the way they first got in contact with Buddhism and what particular aspect of Buddhism had grabbed their attention. I think these two questions are important if we want to understand how Buddhism is going to be establish in our countries, if it is, because it has to do with the particular modes of the teachings and their guts appeal.

Although the responses to the two first questions were not uniform, I could discern a unifying principle, that is, that ethics and compassion on one hand and the development of the mind on the other hand were the paramount reasons for those embracing Buddhism. For example, one of the participants said the following: "I discovered that the teachings corroborated my way of thinking, which was different than the rest in a Catholic country like mine. I understood why I cared for the animals and tried to follow an ethical life. The teachings came to nourish and give me strength to uphold my beliefs, so different, on occasions, to the Catholic fold."

This answer clearly reflects the experience of many people who have embraced Buddhism in the Spanish-speaking world. It is important to point out that Buddhism is the only religion I know which has an specific precept regarding the protection of all kinds of life. Although this, at the beginning, may seem strange to many people in our societies, I have discovered that over time they start to understand and connect, in surprising ways, with this precept of not taking life

[2] http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-24/us/census.hispanics_1_hispanic-population-illegal-immigration-foreign-born?_s=PM:US – accessed on 30 October 2011

or harming beings. A precise example of this can be found in the recent movements in Spain and Mexico working towards abolishing the cruelty against animals like in the case of bullfighting. It should be said that although some of these movement's principles may not derive directly from Buddhism, undoubtedly they have been influenced by it.

The teaching of the Four Noble Truths appeals to many as something beyond dogma that can be experienced by oneself. Buddhism is a very different religion from the others which emphasize blind faith. Some people who have embraced Buddhism say that this is liberating because finally they have come to a religion that appeals to the intellect. This is an important point in our increasingly secular and educated societies. In this respect it should be mentioned that Buddhism has entered our countries through the educated and affluent circles. Normally it is the educated individual who does not accept the established dogmas.

The fact that one is responsible for one's own actions was also often present in the responses of those interviewed. This is important because when they understand that, they are ready for taking responsibility for their actions and for what also happens to them.

Another question asked was about the main traditions established in their countries. Here I found that the Zen and Tibetan schools (Gelugpa specially) are at the front, being the first to have been established, especially in Mexico, and also the ones with the greatest number of followers. When asked why these were the prevalent traditions, the answer was, in the case of Tibetan Buddhism, because of its folklore and rituals, and because of having an authority structure very similar to the Catholic church. Also they answered that its practice was more within reach of ordinary people. Regarding Zen Buddhism, the answer had to do with its simplicity, 'only meditation practice'.

The next question was about the differences between the traditions. Here it was mentioned, in the first place, some discourses (suttas) that are not common to all traditions. Secondly, the difference in meditation techniques, the use of mantras and visualizations in the Vajrayana tradition, the vipassana in the Theravada tradition, and the Zen tradition emphasizing 'only sitting'.

There are also differences in the protection formulas, the ethics' demand, the emphasis that the Vajrayana tradition places on the shunyata concept, and the importance of Bodhisatva in the Mahayana tradition.

Regarding the Theravada tradition, they mentioned its sobriety and orthodox protocol, its emphasis in searching and practicing what the Buddha really taught, the absence of interest in rituals and ceremonies, the exhaustive study of the ultimate realities (consciousness, mental factors, matter and Nibbāna), and having the Canon Pali as its unique source of the teachings.

The following question explored the meaning of Sangha. For some Sangha meant a 'community' which includes both, lay and monastic people. For others it meant those individuals who have reached the holy life, the Ariya, the Noble Ones, the ones that got completely liberated from negative emotions and which constitute one of the objects of Refuge. For others, it only meant the monastic order.

When asked if the Sangha had a predominant place in their lives, most of them answered affirmatively. But this answer has to be qualified because as we saw in the previous paragraph, the word Sangha has different meaning to different people.

The next question was about a comparison between the place the Sangha occupies in their lives and the place the Sangha occupies in the lives of ethnic Buddhists. All the interviewed agreed that there was an important difference between ethnic Buddhists and themselves because the former understand perfectly well the protocol towards the monastic Sangha.

The following question was about the protocol required to address and relate to the Sangha. I thought about this question because we have seen in some Latin American countries that the protocol is a difficult issue for people. It is something completely alien to them. Most of the people seem to be looking for a teaching without the devotional aspect of Buddhism. This could lead us, in another dissertation, to explore more thoroughly about the establishment of Buddhism in Western societies as a religion or as a way of living, leaving aside the devotional way.

Some of those interviewed expressed that they found the Theravada tradition orthodox, but necessary in order to keep the traditional way, because it was taught by the Buddha; something that could not be comprehended by common people at first but could be later understood. Someone wittily commented that the monastic Sangha could also search the Middle Way between (1) being simply members of a community of renunciate disciples of the Buddha that practice, study and pass on His teachings, and (2) being part of a group that needs organizational structures (and also a dose of external practices) in order to survive through time. Another person commented that one has to value the Sangha in order to accept the protocol and have the humility to apply oneself to that. For example, the offering of food is not an act of servility but a commitment with the Dhamma, valuing the teaching of the Sangha. Another commented that protocol was beneficial for lay people in order to be aware of the actions of speech and the body, and to help the Sangha to keep the Vinaya -meaning that it is good to make an effort to fulfill the protocol when the bhikkhus and the bhikkhunis make an effort to fulfill the Vinaya. Two of the interviewed answered they did not know the protocol.

The last question was about the future of Buddhism in their countries. Some of them were optimistic about it. A person from Uruguay said that people from her country are now able to differentiate between the true teaching and the one that comes from cheap talkativeness. Another person from Spain was more realistic, commenting that quite a few people prefer something rational, something that 'can be proven by oneself,' therefore rejecting kamma, rebirth, the heavens, the hells, the devas, and so on. This means that they only accept the practice putting aside all that has to do with religion. Those with a certain degree of curiosity about Buddhism and who do not feel rejection towards the religious issue, often tend to approach the Tibetan tradition, where they can live with some devotion. There are also those who only want to practice meditation without having to study at all; so they approach the Zen school.

Some of the Buddhist groups, in order to organize retreats or invite a monk to give them Dhamma talks, have suggested the cooperation with small fees. It is not unusual to find that, for example, of the thirty people that belong to a group, only three or four are the ones that cooperate and pay the fees. It happens often that one or two persons are the ones that end up supporting all the costs of whatever event they undertake. Most of the time everything is done with the donations of the few ones who have the financial resources.

Buddhist groups in the Spanish-speaking countries need financial help in order to further develop and to be able to focus completely in the teachings. Most Buddhist groups are formed by volunteers who have busy schedules and scarce time and resources. This is a serious limitation for the further progress and development of Buddhism in the Spanish-speaking countries.

For almost 15 years Venerable Nandisena has been doing much work teaching Buddhism in the Spanish-speaking world by means of the Internet and also personally in the Dhamma Vihara, Mexico, and in different countries. Through all these years we have seen many people coming and rejoicing about the monastery where the conditions are optimal for the practice of meditation. But some of the people that show so much gratitude sometimes do not stay because they are very much involved in their own life and this does not allow them to go deeper into the practice or to support the monastery.

Conclusion

I have written about the differences between the various Buddhist traditions, but before finishing this paper I want to assert that whatever these differences are, what really matters are the points of convergence. When you find generosity, compassion, and the Noble Eightfold Path in someone, you find a real and good companion, you find somebody you can count on.

In fact there are several differences between the different traditions as there are within the different groups belonging to a same tradition. Some years ago Venerable Bhikkhu Nandisena provided me with some reading material. Then I learned about one subtle difference, which has not been mentioned in this paper, that some type of citta (consciousness), one of the ultimate realities, is considered by some within the Theravada tradition as unconditioned, when in fact, the only unconditioned ultimate reality is Nibbāna. This subtle difference is important because if citta were unconditioned that would make all the difference.

Why are the Zen and the Vajrayana traditions predominant in most of the Spanish-speaking countries? Some of the reasons have already been mentioned here. One of them could be because rituals and folklore are something attractive to people, as well as the meditation practice. Also due to the style, more open and adapted to the Western modern mentality. Regarding the Zen tradition, the explanation seems to revolve around its simplicity, 'only sitting'. Quite a few people prefer something that goes far from anything that could possibly sound as a religion, so 'sitting' seems to be quite simple and enough to get what they need: interior peace, tranquility and inner strength.

Many years have passed since I belonged to the Buddhist Community of Mexico. Then we used to have regular meetings so we could get to know each other better. It was in one of those meetings when someone belonging to the Zen or Tibetan tradition provided me with the information she had about the Theravada tradition. In fact she did not know the Theravada as Theravada, but as "Hinayana", and she told me it had a selfish approach, and so on. This was something I could not understand. Now that many years have passed I realize that when people have this kind of answers, it is because of the lack of correct information.

I think nowadays it is becoming easier to find out things for oneself. So it will only depend on the people themselves when doing the searching. I think the decision they will make then will be closer to what they want and need.

Another matter I want to deal with is the protocol in the Theravada tradition. As I mentioned before, I thought to apply this questionnaire to people either belonging to the Mahayana or the Theravada tradition, but people that finally know both traditions fairly well and also have met Venerable Bhikkhu Nandisena and respect him.

The question about the Theravada protocol was very simple, with no specifications, so people could answer freely. So most of the interviewed answered they did not have problems with it, but mentioned something like: 'it's a little orthodox, but it's alright because we are keeping the original Buddhist tradition', 'for the Dhamma it is worth the effort', or 'one has to exert regarding the protocol when the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis exert on the Vinaya' or 'you can exert yourself to keep up with the protocol if you value the Dhamma'.

Although no one mentioned something in particular, I could see there seems to be certain kind of resistance to the idea of vowing before someone. The Western idea of doing so is synonymus of accepting that someone else is better than oneself or superior. But when you think of the Vinaya the Sangha is observing, and ponder about the time dedicated by them working for the Dhamma, you realize that vowing is totally appropriate and corresponding. But regardless of that for Western people it is an important issue to consider.

One of the interviewed answered the following: 'For me the sobriety of the Theravada tradition is its most outstanding feature'.

Now I have come to the end of this paper. Regarding the future of Buddhism in the Spanish-speaking world, although there were some optimistic opinions, there were also others, with which I personally agree, that were not so optimistic. Unfortunately the Theravada tradition, although very much appreciated by quite a few people, does not seem to have much future because people seem to reject the religious part. A proof of this is the success of the Goenka method that keeps aside completely the religious part and focuses on the meditation part. But there is hope because we are going to introduce Buddhism in a completely different way.

We have come to the conclusion that we need to establish Buddhism on a different footing. This new way of establishing Buddhism is through the creation of educational and academic institutions. Regarding this, I have good news. On October 3, 2011, the Hispanic Institute of Buddhist Studies (IEBH) was founded in Mexico City. The IEBH is one of the first institutions of its kind in the Spanish-speaking world. It will be dedicated to the academic teaching of Buddhism as well as carrying on different kinds of research regarding the application of the teachings to our societies, and forming a translation team that will be tasked with rendering the teachings from the different canons into Spanish.

Societal Relevance and Place of Buddhism in France

Rejane Serra
European Buddhist Union

The principle of secularity

France was held to be the eldest daughter of the Church up until the French Revolution in 1789. The king exercised temporal authority, the Pope spiritual authority. This situation was valid up to 1789, at which point the Catholic religion became the national religion. This change however provoked a schism, with one faction submitting to Rome, the other to the state. In order to put an end to the crisis, Bonaparte signed a treaty (le Concordat) in 1801 (15th July 1801) - a compromise ensuring religious freedom and obliterating the notion of an official religion on condition public order be maintained.

The principle of secularity took shape during the French Revolution with the affirmation of universal principles, including conscientious freedom and equal rights as expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. In the 19th century, the laws on secularity gradually freed the state of its historical links with the Catholic Church and created new political and social norms based on the principle of republican universalism. This process, within a wider movement towards modernity, charged the sovereign people with redefining basic political and social principles: executive, legislative and judicial powers, the organization of the state with its various components and representations, education, civil rights, the evolution of law and morality, etc., without reference to any religious dogma. The Third Republic in particular reorganized the school system, introducing public, secular and compulsory education (thanks to Jules Ferry). This process concludes with the law separating church and state in 1905, giving definitive form to explicit secularity.

Throughout the 20th century, the state has introduced legislation generalizing the notion of secularity with new rules concerning the family and the individual. With the French Constitution of 1958, secularity becomes the corner-stone of the republican pact and the guarantee of national unity.

Today, communal organization based on secularity makes it possible to envisage both the diversity of people and the necessity of unity to ensure their co-existence. This is obtained by combining conscientious freedom, by which religious options can be made without constraint, equal rights for all whatever their spiritual choice, and the definition of a common law governed by public interest, universally shared.

Jean Baubérot similarly defines contemporary secularity with a three-fold formula: the state is secular, freedom of belief and worship is guaranteed and all forms of belief have equal value. He notes however that emphasis may be put on one or the other of the three: secularization for the defender of neutrality, conscientious freedom for the believer, while adepts of minority faiths insist on the equal value of belief systems.

Secularity, promoting religious pluralism, encourages dialogue and peaceful coexistence of religious which should in turn advance peace in the nation and between nations.

The situation in Alsace-Moselle, governed for two centuries by the original Concordat in a secular society proposing a religious diversity recognized and accepted by the population in Alsace-Moselle, may seem paradoxical. The local people however are strongly attached to their local laws and have no wish to conform to the situation in the rest of France.

Sociology of religion

Religion was central, for the French founders of sociology, being at one and the same time observers and actors in the advent of modernity, the development of science, the democratization of political life, the rationalization of economic activity, the bureaucratization of society and a parallel disenchantment of the world. This is the context in which Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, later Emil Durkheim, attempted to create new all-inclusive political and religious ideologies capable of giving meaning to human lives, just as the Catholic religion had ensured social cohesion over many centuries.

However, it is to Emil Durkheim that we owed the decisive impulse given to religious sociology with his two major works: “Suicide” in 1897 and “The elementary Forms of religious Life” in 1912. He defines religion as a “cohesive system of beliefs and practices involving the sacred, (i.e. the separate or taboo), beliefs and practices which unify a moral community, called “church”, for all those who adhere to it[1]”. He sought to define religion from the study of the religious elements in so-called primitive societies. He then narrowed his definition with the distinction between the sacred and the profane, holding that to maintain a certain social cohesion, religion was the necessary representative of the moral authority of a collectivity over all its individuals. Thus, religion has a social function.

We ought now to look at the meaning of this highly polysemical word. Three etymologies are possible:

- Relate (Fr. relier = to link). Certain ancient writers such as Lactantius or Tertullian derive ‘religio’ from the verb ‘ligare’ (to bind or link). With this commonly accepted meaning, religion expresses the idea of a “relation”, both horizontally, between men, and vertically, between them and something other or superior.
- Recollect (Fr. recueillir = gather together). Ciciero connects ‘religio’ with the verb ‘legere’ (to collect or pick up). This expresses the notion of gathering people together. This does not imply an organic link for gathering together does not signify binding.
- Reinvent (Fr. Ressaisir = recover). For the famous French linguist Emile Benvéniste, the noun ‘religio’ expresses the idea of “recovering by a fresh choice” of “returning to a previous demarche, of reappriating mentally the ordinary facts and events of social life[2]”.

These changes of meaning cover first the attitude induced by the experience of the sacred, then the whole gamut of manifestations and beliefs linked to this attitude.

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[1] Emile DURKHEIM, les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, Paris, PUF, Quadrige, 7ème édition, 1985, p.65.

[2] E.BENVÉNISTE, Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes, Paris, Ed. de minuit, t.2, 1969, pouvoir, droit, religion, p. 270 à 272.

These different etymologies reveal the Western difficulty in conceiving of religion in isolation whereas in so-called traditional societies, in which the religious and social are always co-extensive, no such distinction exists. In these societies religion links individuals together, connects them to the invisible or not yet visible part of their environment and regulates the bond between the social and the sacred.

Taking etymology into account imposes on us the distinction between our modern societies and so-called traditional societies. “Religion” is a Western concept dating back to the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine under whom Christianity became the state religion. It thus became necessary to differentiate between religion and the concept of state. Later the concept of religion came to be extended to other fields of reality giving rise to the development of the science of the sacred, then of religion, finally, human and social sciences, including the sociology of religion.

The variety of religious phenomena led to a need for classification. Max Weber’s three main types is one of the better known:

1. Ritualistic religions, based on respect for the law and adaptation to the real state of the world
2. Religions aiming at salvation, based on conviction in expectation of a savior
3. Soteriological religions based on belief and expectation of a savior who is at the same time a redeemer.

Max Weber[3] also studied the question of the relationship between religion and society from another angle. His work high-lighted the logical structure of religious systems and their consequences for the economic and social structures of society. This led him inevitably to propose ideal types of religious “specialists” (priest, magician, prophet), forms of religious socialization (churches, sects, mystical networks) and power structures (traditional, legal-bureaucratic, charismatic)[4]. This typology is still relevant today.

The sociology of religion arose out of the observed loss of preeminence of religion in modern society. With the development of science and its technological applications in all fields of activity, men came to feel they could control their own destiny. At the same time, natural resources seemed to be unlimited, leading to the modern belief that all desires could be infinitely satisfied.

This loss of ascendancy finds expression in the concept of secularization. In France, this is referred to the conflict between the Catholic Church and the state, focused on the legal separation of churches and state and the problem of secularity in the school system. In sociological terms, the notion of secularization comprises a whole process which profoundly modifies the status of religion in society. Four elements can be distinguished:

- rationalization: religion is no longer the organizing agent of society and social organization is no longer based on the parish ;
- differentiation of authority: various religious responsibilities are taken over by the state (registration, hospices and assistance, health, education) ;
- privatization: belief is pluralized and privatized. Belief and religious practice have become private affairs depending on individual conscience ;

[3] Max WEBER, Economie et Société/2, Paris, Plon Pocket, rééd. 1995, chapitre 5, p. 145 à 409
[4] Max WEBER, Economie et Société/1, Paris, Plon Pocket, rééd. 1995, ch. 3, § 1 à 5, p. 285 à 325.

- individualization: emphasis is put on a personal and autonomous demarche. The individual becomes the actor of his own life, capable of constructing his own significations giving meaning to his life.

The French historian and philosopher, Marcel Gauchet, prefers to speak about the "decline of religion[5]" rather than secularization or laicization, both ecclesiastical in origin. "The decline of religion does not imply decline of religious belief but the abandonment of a world structured by religion, where religion dominates the political form of a society and defines social bonds".

This view however is contradicted by the emergence from 1965-70 onwards of forms of religious expression outside recognized religious systems. These arose on American university campuses, involving students perfectly integrated in American society. These new religious movements are surprisingly diversified both in form and content : Oriental religions, practices aimed at developing human potential, borrowings from occultist or divinatory science, from scientific or technological fields (Christian science, Scientology, Raelisme), the wide-spread extension of sects and Evangelical or Pentecostal churches, apocalyptic prophecies, and so on. These are syncretized to form novel combinations. Almost all these new religious movements have spread from America to Europe.

These phenomena are seen as responses to the crisis in modernity, as a form of protestation or even a refusal of the process of modernization underway in the second half of the 20th century. The uprooting of people, the disruption of identity, the mingling of cultures and the ever-increasing domination of a visual culture in advanced industrialized societies, loss of faith in the certainties of both tradition and modernity, all lead to a re-construction of what gives meaning and value to behavior.

The traditional religions resist the proliferation of new religious movements. Institutions change to adapt to the demands of modern life, revalorizing tradition or elaborating new forms of Christian life. As a result the field of religious sociology has widened to take into account the restructuration of religion within modernity. After a period of observation and inventory, a classification of the different components of the new religiosity has emerged.

In her analysis of the new religious movements, Danièle Hervieu-Léger refers back to tradition, distinguishing three major currents[6]:

- a "spiritual" current composed of mobile groups and networks, devoted to self-improvement with individuals seeking to harmonize their lives, reconcile themselves with themselves, others and their environment ;
- a "conversionist" current characterized by a brutal conversion entailing a break with earlier modes of life ;
- a "millenialist" current involving the expected advent of a new world and its preparation.

The emergence and proliferation of new religious movements result from the individualization and subjectivization of religious belief which comes with the destructuring of religious institutions. Religion becomes personal, relating to the private sphere. Denis Jeffrey emphasizes the "flexibility of this personal religion which mirrors the subject creating it[7]". Sociologists

[5] Marcel GAUCHET, la religion dans la démocratie, Paris, Gallimard, 1998, p.11.
[6] G. DAVIE et Danièle HERVIEU-LÉGER, Identités religieuses en Europe, Paris, La Découverte, 1996, p. 277 à 280.
[7] Denis JEFFREY, La jouissance du sacré, Religion et postmodernité, Paris, Armand Colin, 1988, p.15.

refer to "do-it-yourself" belief and the Dalai Lama to "religious supermarkets[8]", a wide variety of choice to help from, according to one's needs. The Dalai Lama sees this as an advantage considering the diversity of religious sensibilities. Different people require approaches and practices which may be different, complementary or similar but approached differently. Compassion for instance is envisaged by Christians in relationship with God whereas Buddhists include it in the Bodhisattva practices. In the long run both aim at developing compassion.

The state of flux in modern society involves people in a constant search for the meaning of their lives, hence the "do-it-yourself" characteristic of the new religious movements. These all offer something which could not be found in the older religions. In view of their dynamism, some sociologists refer to a return of religion or of the sacred, where the theory of secularization had foreseen the imminent death of religions reduced to a merely residual state. The famous formulation attributed to the French intellectual, writer and politician, André Malraux, is often quoted: "The twenty-first century will be mystic (spiritual) or nothing".

The contemporary return of the religious and the new forms of religiosity correspond to a loss of confidence in modernity, which no longer offers a solution to existential problems. There are two ways of analyzing the phenomenon. It may represent a momentary surge corresponding to a critical period in modernity, fated to disappear as things improve. But it could also be a product of modernity itself, not necessarily destined to eliminate religion, rather, as for other institutions, introducing profound modifications and new functions.

The phenomenon does seem to be long-standing, increasingly structured and evolving. It has been calculated that 60 % of the population in France is Christian, 25 % agnostic, 6 % Muslim, 2 % Jewish and 2 % Buddhist. Only 10 % are regular practicing Catholics. The spread of Buddhism is an excellent laboratory in which to observe the modern metamorphoses of religion in so far as it bears witness to a double movement of decomposition and recomposition of belief.

The Influence of Missionaries and Philologists

From the Middle Ages, merchants like Marco Polo and religious emissaries such as William of Rubrouck noticed the great virtue of Tibetan monks and the Singhalese people. Marco Polo fairly accurately described the life of Buddha, and from the 12th century onwards missionary scholars translated some Buddhist texts from Tibet. During the Renaissance, missionaries who knew nothing about medieval contacts became interested in Buddhism, most often describing it as an atheistic and perverted religion.

Despite a certain discontinuity in the discovery of Buddhism by Europeans, it is curious to note that it has always been interpreted it in the same way, that is to say, as the myth of a magical Tibet; this can be observed in Marco Polo's writings in the fourteenth century, those of a Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Andrade in the seventeenth century, of a theosophist Alfred Percy Sinnett in the late nineteenth century and the cartoonist Hergé in the twentieth century. Over and above the diversity of places and times, there is therefore unity in the European view, shaped by a common culture, imagination and similar mental structures.

[8] DALAÏ LAMA, expression said at a conference for the members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1996.

The idea that there could be a relationship between the various cults - Burmese, Buddhist, Chinese, Singhalese, Japanese, Tibetan, etc., was advanced only in the seventeenth century and it was only around 1880 that the word "Buddhism" appeared. This came about through the work of Joseph Deguignes, who collected different sorts of very specific information, which led to the perception of the unity of Dharma through a huge diversity of cultural expressions, and gradually to the conceptualization of Buddhism.

The scholarly discovery of Asian religions was a crucial development. In 1771 Anquetil-Duperron published the Zend-Avesta (the Holy Book of Zoroastrianism). Thus Europeans were able to understand and translate the languages of the Near East (Egyptian, Aramaic and Syrian hieroglyphs) and the Far East (Sanskrit, Pali, ancient Chinese). The Jesuit Roberto de Nobili was the first European to read Sanskrit and in 1664 Henry Roth published the first Sanskrit grammar. In 1784, William Jones, an English orientalist and linguist founded the first English Asiatic Society in Calcutta and translated the Bhagavad Gita in 1785. He discovered the relationship between Sanskrit and ancient European languages and put forward the hypothesis of "Indo-European". This was the first real school of scholars who studied and reflected on many Hindu texts. Moreover, the Frenchman Abel Remusat translated the main treatises on Chinese Buddhism. The Hungarian Alexander Csoma Körös elaborated a grammar book and a Tibetan-English dictionary of 30,000 words which were published in 1834. He also revealed two major and sacred collections of books named Kangyur and Tangyur. A copy of the Kangyur was deposited by Körös in the Royal Library of Paris and 88 works of the Sanskrit Buddhist Canon, recuperated in Nepal, were sent to the Asiatic Society of Paris by the British diplomat Bran Hodgson. Eugene Burnouf, a founding member of the Asiatic Society in Paris, created in 1822, was a young and exceptionally gifted philologist who updated the Indian origins of Buddhism and in 1852 published "The Lotus of Good Faith", translated from Sanskrit. He is considered as the real founder of the Buddhist philology. This was the beginning of the popularity of Buddhist studies and scholarly works, and translations multiplied thanks to outstanding scholars such as Sylvain Levi, Louis de la Vallee Poussin and Jean Przyluski. The growth in documentation obliged their successors to specialize in the study of a specific geographical or linguistic area. This enabled better understanding of the different Buddhist traditions and the way in which they developed within a particular culture.

Highlighted by scholarly studies, Buddhism fascinates intellectuals, historians and journalists, who systematically need to compare Buddhism to Christianity. It highlights the convergence of Tibetan and Zen traditions: traditions from another tradition that was abolished, the idea of the unity of mankind, similarities at the level of hierarchy, rituals, pilgrimages and monastic life. As a result, the French feel close to these religious traditions and do not hesitate to speak of "Catholicism of the East".

Meanwhile, Colonel Olcott and Helena Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society in 1875 and sought to build an "esoteric Buddhism", a third way between materialistic science and dogmatic religion. They justified their doctrine by occult teachings transmitted through enigmatic Tibetan Masters and the myth of Tibet magic. There was also in Europe at that time a revival of esotericism (interest in dialogue with the dead, white or black magic, superior psychic powers provided by disembodied spirits, magnetism…).. Numerous secret societies were created and spread the idea of a universal primordial religion prior to all historical religions by claiming that they held the keys of the primordial tradition, which was transmitted only to elite through the secret initiation rituals of Tibetan Lamas. Freemasonry flourished at that time too. Finally, the French explorer Alexandra

David Neel, who acquired a solid knowledge of Eastern languages and religions among Hindu sages and Tibetan Lamas after more than twenty years in Asia, enabled Buddhism to be discovered by the French and was able to transmit adequate teaching to the modern mentality. Her works were a major success and are still being published.

Scholarly controversies also grew with Henry Kern, Emile Sénart, Victor Cousin and Jules Barthelémy Saint-Hilaire. Theologians (Hippolito Desideri, Orazio della Penna, and Cosme de Torrès) were not the only ones to settle their conflicts by drawing on arguments in Buddhism in response to the virulent attacks of some theologians. The philosophers of the Enlightenment (Diderot, Voltaire) were interested in Buddhism to combat Catholicism, which claimed to hold the Unique Truth. The German Romantics (Friedrich Schlegel, Herder, and Forster) turned to the Orient in their revolt against rationalism and Western mechanization.

Nietzsche was initially won over by Buddhist philosophy after reading the book of his master Schopenhauer, who wrote that life is suffering, it can not be cured and that the only way (a rather extreme proposition) for man is to give up living. Then his book *"Humain, trop Humain" (Human, Too Human*) was a turning point in his thinking. Nietzsche rejected the pessimism of Schopenhauer and rejected Buddhism also, as a negation of life, even though it emphasizes the exceptional qualities of Buddhism by comparing it to Christianity. But the fact of being against life, this attraction to emptiness, is the characteristic feature of nihilism and nihilistic ethic. He acknowledges that suffering is an essential part of all existence, but he provides two different answers. He says that one can eliminate suffering by detaching oneself from the world, in renunciation and abstention, that he calls the wisdom of Buddhist nihilism, or accept the world as it is with one's share of suffering but with the desire "to be". This is called the tragic wisdom of Nietzsche. That is why, in his later works, Nietzsche continues to warn against a "new European Buddhism" as a doctrine of denial of suffering and taking into account compassion, pity, fraternity, the question of pleasure and displeasure. His criticism of Buddhism as a nihilistic religion is nevertheless unjustified because Buddha said that we could no longer suffer in the third Noble Truth, during his first teaching at Sarnath. On the other hand, with regard to the Buddhist attitude to suffering, Nietzsche's critique seems more appropriate and the predicting of the emergence of a European Buddhism is relevant. It is obvious that Buddhism offers a remedy against suffering (Nietzsche preferred the tragedy of life) and advocates compassion for all living beings (rejected by Nietzsche as a sign of weakness). In addition, Western society does not stop evolving towards hedonism (abhorred by Nietzsche) and towards hypersensitivity to pain.

Then neglected by contemporary philosophers, Buddhism, however, interested some prominent psychoanalysts (Freud, especially Carl Gustav Jung and Erich Fromm). Jung recognized Buddha as one of the greatest geniuses of mankind and emphasized the revolutionary character of his message.

It can be seen that over the centuries, and according to the concerns and ideologies of the Westerners who discovered it, Buddhism is considered as a degenerate Catholicism (the Spanish Jesuit Francis Xavier, the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Andrade, and the French priest Régis-Evariste Huc, who later changed his mind and said that Buddhism is an open and very tolerant religion), a Buddhist pessimism and a hopeless nihilism (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche), a doctrine of emptiness (Alfred Vacant and Eugène Mangenot), integral humanism (Edgar Quinet), rationalism, atheist mysticism (Ernest Renan, Jules Ferry and Auguste Comte), esoteric wisdom, atheistic humanism (Joseph Edkins, Max Müller, Ludwig Feuerbach), or modern humanism (Edwin Arnold).

During colonial times, despite their efforts, particularly in education, the colonial policy of France caused the great hostility of the Asian people, as much against missionaries as representatives of the Republic. The conversion of the Asians in Cochin China and Tonkin was conducted during the 17th century by Jesuit missionaries. Alexandre de Rhodes played a major role in converting the Vietnamese to Catholicism and in the Romanization of the Vietnamese language so that it can be read by Westerners. He also wrote an Annamese Portuguese and Latin dictionary.

In this colonial context, Buddhist studies developed according to the particular relationship of European countries with their Asian colonies. Taking advantage of the French presence in Indochina, in 1889, French Orientalists founded the French School of the Far East in Hanoi, directed by Louis Finot, and including the famous Bulletin that was published in the year 1900.

But deeper divisions cross this distribution resulting from historical contingencies. We can see a certain cultural affinity between Catholic countries and Mahayana Buddhism, and between Protestant countries and Hinayana Buddhism.

We may compare this situation with the theory of Max Weber. Indeed, it starts from the observation that capitalism arose in the sixteenth century in Western countries, mainly in Protestant countries and milieux. In his book, *the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* he explains the link between Protestantism and the rise of capitalism. For Catholics, salvation comes into effect only by fidelity to the Church and not by intense activity in the terrestrial world. For Protestants, the profession becomes a vocation, a test of faith. At the beginning, this behaviour was influenced by a taste for abstinence, savings and refusal of luxury, work discipline and professional conscience. This way of life and behaviour is spreading in Europe and the United States and is becoming more substantial after two or three generations. For the Protestants, the individual has no longer to answer for his or her actions before terrestrial authority which is the Church; he or she finds himself or herself alone with God and cannot change his or her future. This is predestination. Only God knows the elect and the reprobates. According to this principle, worldly success in a professional activity is primarily a means of glorifying God. This success has value as a sign of election. Max Weber explained that work and the meaning of savings are valued among Protestants, not for themselves, but as a means of confirmation by the worldly success of a long-awaited salvation.

In line with this assertion, in Mahayana Buddhism, the practitioner is liberated in order to help all sentient beings, whereas in Theravada Buddhism, the practitioner is liberated for himself. This is an individual liberation which can come closer to predestination for the Protestants. It is therefore not surprising that most French and Italian Orientalists are more readily attracted to the study of Chinese, Japanese, or Tibetan Buddhism, whilst a majority of German, English or Dutch scholars are moving towards Singhalese Buddhism or that of the South-East Asian countries.

Buddhism: the fourth religion in France

Over its 45 years of existence in France, Buddhism has grown considerably. Today there are more than three hundred temples and centers over the whole territory. These Buddhist centers offer sessions of teachings, rituals and prayers, daily or sporadic meditation sessions, meditation retreats and initiations. Buddhism has progressed more rapidly in France than in any other Western

country. The main European Zen dojo is in Touraine, one of the largest Western Tibetan temples is in Burgundy. Several hundreds of French people have accomplished the long three-year retreat; some have replaced Asian teachers or directors of centers. All the Buddhist traditions are represented: Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana and Zen. Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese refugees, forced into exile, came to France around 1975, forming a large contingent of Buddhist practitioners. French converts to Buddhism or certain aspects of it are more and more numerous. The cultural heritage with its rich architecture, statues, stupas, thankas and other colorful Oriental paintings is considerable and proudly displayed. The activities on offer are regular and varied.

According to the French Buddhist Union (U.B.F.), there are thought to be more than 800000 Buddhists in France, three quarters of whom come from Asia. It is calculated that more than 200000 indigenous French people practice Buddhism. Opinion polls, including the BVA (Brûlé, Ville et associés) poll of September 1999, show that five million French people feel close to Buddhism which is the religion most favorably viewed by young people.

The French Doctor of Sociology, Frédéric Lenoir, distinguishes three groups according to degree of involvement:

- practitioners, the most highly involved. They participate in regular seminars and teaching sessions and frequently have links with a spiritual master. They can truly be called converts or faithful followers. Their number is estimated at about 50000.
- a close, intermediary group of people with various types and degrees of involvement, practicing meditation episodically in the "do-it-yourself" context. Most of these people would call themselves atheists or agnostics. Their interest in Buddhism is mainly intellectual. They practice an "à la carte" religion, according to their evolving concerns, needs or the events impacting their lives. This group is thought to be around 150000.
- sympathizers, the least involved. These people would say they have no religion or belong to another religion. They adhere to notions of tolerance, belief in karma, concern for the environment, respect for non-violence, the idea of wisdom and meditation. More than two million people are estimated to belong to this group.

The development of Tibetan Buddhism in France was boosted by the arrival of a number of Tibetan masters fleeing Tibet after the Chinese military invasion in 1959. Among them figure:

- Phende Rinpoche of the Sakya school. He arrived in France in 1970 and founded a first center, Ngor Ewam Phende Ling at Evreux (Normandy) in 1974.
- Dagpo Rinpoche of the Gelugpa school. He arrived in France in 1978 and founded a first center, Ganden Ling at Veneux-les-Sablons, near Fontainebleau in 1978 ; Lungri Namgyel Rinpoche of the same school reached France in 1980 and founded an association Thar Dö Ling at Celles in Seine et Marne.
- Kalu Rinpoche of the Kagyu school, visited France in 1971 and founded Dashang Kagyu Ling (in Burgundy), then Kagyu Rinchen Chö Ling (Montpellier), Kagyu-Dzong in Paris and Karma Ling in Savoy. In later years many Kagyupa high lamas would visit France, including the 16th Karmapa, Pawo Rinpoche and Gendun Rinpoche.

- Gendun Rinpoche (Kagyupa) created two large centers in Dordogne and Auvergne (a study center at Dhagpo Kagyu Ling in Dordogne and the largest Western monastery in Auvergne). Many Western lamas have taken part in two three-year retreats with Gendun Rinpoche. Other smaller urban centers (Karma Teksum Chöling – French : Karma Teksoum Tcheuling = KTT) came into being in France, Spain and Germany.
- Mention can be made of Shambala, founded by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, with a center in Paris and another in Limoges.
- Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche, (Sakyapa). He settled in Switzerland in 1968, and founded many Sakya centers in Europe, including Sakya Tsechen Ling, near Strasbourg, in 1978, now his main European center.
- Lama Thoupten Yeshe and Lama Thoupten Zopa of the Gelugpa school created the Institute Vajra Yogini in Marzens near Toulouse in 1981.
- His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa created Druk Toupten Cheukor Ling, a European center of the Drukpa Lineage, in 1985, in Plouray (Brittany).
- Sogyal Rinpoche (Nyingmapa), visited France in 1980 and, in 1989, set up Lerab Ling near Lodève, Montpellier, the largest Rigpa center in Europe. Sogyal Rinpoche is active world-wide.

Towards the end of the 60s, the charismatic Japanese master Taisen Deshimaru also chose France as the center for transmission of Zen Buddhism. He was the founder and inspiration of innumerable dojos and Zen groups.

The South-East Asian communities remained fairly self-contained while the Zen and Tibetan versions developed in response to the demand of thousands of French people eager to learn about the Buddha's teachings and meditation. Nevertheless Thich Nhât Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist master, also forced into exile, took refuge in France in 1969 and is one of the most committed personalities in the Western world. He resides now in the South-West of France in a Buddhist community called Plum-tree Village founded in 1982. The name refers to the 1250 plum trees owned by the community. Thousands are attracted to his radiant spiritual and humane personality.

Several different kinds of socio-political phenomena have contributed to this propagation of Buddhism in France and in Europe. One of the main reasons is without doubt the proselytism of certain intellectual milieux towards the beginning of the 70s; this brought in its wake a number of specialist Buddhist teachers thus ensuring a firm foundation for the new spirituality. The American billionaire, Bernard Benson, for instance, who converted in the early 70s, used his wealth and influence to invite Tibetan monks to his home in Dordogne where he encouraged them to practice and teach their religion.

Directors and film makers, such as Arnaud Desjardins, also contributed to an awareness of the Buddhist teachings. The Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 also created a media buzz. Richard Gere became the grand ambassador for Buddhism in show-biz. Super-productions, based on the drama of Tibet and the Dalai Lama's biography, were extremely popular: Bernardo Bertolucci's "Little Buddha" in 1993, Jean-Jacques Annaud's "Seven Years in Tibet" and Martin Scorsese's "Kundun" in 1998. From the beginning of the 90s on, there has been a growing number of T.V. broadcasts and articles in the press, while several books have become best-sellers. Sogyal Rinpoche's 'Tibetan Book of Living and Dying', published in France in 1993 under the title "Livre

tibétain de la vie et de la mort", has sold more than a million copies world-wide and been translated into 31 languages. The brilliant scientist, Matthieu Ricard, broke off his career in the Pasteur Institute in 1972, to become the Dalai Lama's official interpreter. His radical involvement, together with his far-reaching intellectual and spiritual development, have won him the admiration of all French Buddhists. His translations are superb.

Through the media, millions of people have come into contact with Buddhism, particularly in its Zen or Tibetan guise, adopting a variety of elements: the practice of meditation, belief in karma, reincarnation, values of tolerance, notions of interdependence, responsibility and non-violence.

The great majority of Buddhist practitioners used to be professional people belonging to the more privileged levels of society. Today however, practically all layers of French society are concerned. Highly qualified managerial staff, less influential middle classes and even the working class are all attracted to the Buddhist way of thinking. Nevertheless in-depth studies have shown that teachers and medical or para-medical professionals form a predominant contingent of converts. This can be explained by the fact that the basic aim of Buddhist teaching is to eradicate all forms of pain and suffering in this world. The same studies show that most conversions are to be found in urban populations. Lastly, it is noteworthy that women form 60% of Tibetan Buddhist adepts but only 40 % practice Zen. These statistics may reflect the masculine character of Zen Buddhism compared with the profoundly feminine Tibetan counterpart. Frédéric Lenoir considers that Zen, exclusively oriented towards silent meditation under the guidance of a master, corresponds to the predominant masculine motivation whereas Tibetan Buddhism with its accent on compassion, the charismatic figure of the lama and the belief in karma, appeals to the feminine. According to this, the more sober, rational and pragmatic Zen is more attractive to men, the more compassionate and emotional Tibetan Buddhism attracts more women. It should not be forgotten however that Tibetan Buddhism frequently puts men and women on an equal footing. There are, for example, many very popular practices of male and female Buddhas, with Avalokiteshvara and Manjushri in the masculine form and Green and White Tara representing the feminine. In addition, male and female symbolize the two aspects of Buddhist practice, respectively method and wisdom. In Tibetan Buddhism, method refers to active compassion, wisdom to transcendental knowledge. Both aspects are necessary to attain Buddhahood. Manifestations (nirmanakaya) can take numerous forms, both masculine and feminine, all working according to need to the benefit of sentient beings.

Why is Buddhism successful in France?

Several reasons can be invoked for the lightning success of Buddhism in France. Without doubt the first relates to a crisis in the monotheistic religions, and particularly in Christianity.

According to the U.B.F. (the French Buddhist Union) most practitioners and sympathizers were originally Christian. Disappointed, dissatisfied, they abandon their original religion to look for the answer to a number of their existential problems in Buddhism. "Prisoners of their institutional strait-jacket, the Christian Churches no longer correspond to the need for a tangible and living spirituality sought by the faithful and on offer in Buddhism". The analysis is open to discussion however: it is only normal in a Christian country like France to find a higher percentage of Christians than of or Hindus, Jews or Muslims. The rare Hindus, Jews, and Muslims are present in the centers

in the same proportion as in the population at large. The phenomenon concerns all types of religion, though exoticism and the pleasure of change may sometimes play a part. In this case, many adepts return to their original religion after a few years. Many lamas, including the Dalai Lama, advise people not to abandon their original religion which is easier for them to practice. Naturally, one can always choose a different religion, but this should be only after long reflection.

In addition, Buddhism with its philosophy of inner peace, its practice of yoga and meditation enjoys a positive image in France. The first Sofres opinion poll on French attitudes to religion, published in 1994 by the Figaro (a newspaper similar to the Washington Post) put Buddhism in third place as regards to religious preference.

Buddhism is also felt to be modern, representing the principle values of modernity: freedom to follow one's own spiritual path, a religion based more on experience and individual reasoning than on a dogmatic theology, efficiency of a practice which has a direct impact on daily life, tolerance and the absence of a normative moral discourse. One becomes Buddhist on taking refuge, the only official sign of belonging to the Buddhist Sangha. This is conceived and experienced by the faithful as a personal commitment to the path of the Buddha. One can take refuge at any age.

At the same time, Buddhism offers the guarantee of an authentic spiritual tradition with accomplished masters attached to unbroken and clearly identified lineages.

And lastly, based as it is on the idea of a reduction maybe even the elimination of suffering and human dissatisfaction, Buddhism proves attractive in a society tormented by the ills of consumerism (unemployment, anxiety, depression). Here again, specialists of religions questions in the CNRS (Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques = the National Centre for Scientific Research) have shown that a large proportion of practitioners of the "new religions" were experiencing psychological or professional difficulties before adopting their new spirituality. The rush towards Buddhist religious philosophy also owes much to rising discontent with former political norms (socialism and capitalism).

A philosophy for some, a religion for others, all adepts agree that the Buddhist path gives access to wisdom. The philosophy is of interest even divorced from practice. An extremely supple and rich spiritual path, it is open to all sorts of interpretations, arrangements and identificatory combinations according to individual need. It can be variously defined with regard to one's degree of involvement: a religion, a philosophy, an 'art de vivre', a spiritual path or a practice. Buddhism comprises all of these but each may be taken separately. Its success also seems to correspond to three major repressions in Western modernity:

1. repression of the imaginary and the irrational aspect of the mind,
2. repression of the individual quest for meaningfulness, and
3. abandonment in the West of the intimate exploration of the inner world of conscience in favor of the exploration of the universe and external phenomena.

A rising interest over the last decade or more in the accompaniment of the sick and dying or the dead and palliative care have also contributed. The dharma offers the hope of a certain serenity through a process of distancing. Loving-kindness and compassion play a part, together with wisdom as a path to knowledge. Westerners are often perplexed by sickness and death, nor knowing what

attitude to adopt or how to behave towards people who are sick. They turn to Buddhists to help in their approach to suffering and death. The rituals performed by lamas are appreciated and requested, both before and after death. And one has to admit that they are often beneficial.

Institutionally, the U.B.F. (French Buddhist Union) was founded in 1986 and represents an important step in the process of recognition of Buddhism by the civil authorities. Then, in 1990, the prison authorities gave permission for the appointment of two Buddhist chaplains in the penitentiary system. Over the last few years, Buddhism has been de facto acknowledged by public authority as the fourth religion in France and since 1997, Buddhists have a right to a weekly broadcast every Sunday morning in the framework of the religious programs produced for the public T.V. Channel (A 2). The state also concedes certain legal advantages to Buddhist religious associations.

Buddhists are nowadays invited to take part in meetings and public debate on an equal footing with representatives of the major religious traditions and attract the attention of politicians and press. Personalities such as the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Dalai Lama, or Thich Nhât Hanh, proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 by Martin Luther King, have also contributed to the popularity of Buddhism. The national public authorities have now taken cognizance of the undeniable sociological fact represented by the presence of Buddhism in France. Since the year 2009, the President of the U.B.F. has been included in the invitations to the French President's New Year Ceremony for religious authorities. Meetings between the different religious communities are held regularly. In January 2011, the C.B.A. (Alsatian Buddhist Community) was created in Strasbourg uniting the Japanese, Laotian, Tibetan and Vietnamese Buddhist communities. In June they collaborated in the organization of the Buddha Day festivities during which the relics of the Buddha presented to France by Thailand were put on show. Recognized by the public authorities and by other religions, Buddhism can be said to have passed the first stage in its acculturation in France.

Is Buddhism an "opportunity" for spirituality in the larger sense and for other religions?

Definition of a religion

All religions can be defined as entities determined by beliefs and dogmas that define the relationship between man and the sacred, but also an ensemble of specific practices and rites belonging to each of these beliefs. A religion creates a link with a continuation of life and those who practice a religion prepare for it. In the three largest monotheist religions, there is a God creator. In Buddhism however, there is nothing of the sort and death is only a stage on the path that leads to enlightenment. This calls traditional ways of belief into question and in consequence, the manner of living one's life.

Inter-religious dialogue and the influence of the great masters

Inter-religious dialogue is a source of enrichment for all spiritual traditions and can also help people learn from each other. It is enough to evoke the names of Fathers Henry Le Saux, Raimon Panikkar, Thomas Merton or Christian de Chergé. Their contribution to the dialogue was decisive. Henri Le Saux (who adopted the Indian name of Abhishiktananda, 1910-1973) was a French Benedictine monk and a mystical figure of Indian Christianity, who greatly contributed to the dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism. Raimon Panikkar, (1918-2010), priest and Professor of Oriental Philosophy in the United States, was one of the instigators of Hindu-Christian inter-religious dialogue. Thomas Merton, (1915-1968), born in France, was a writer, a Trappist monk and American social activist. He was also a great partisan of inter-religious dialogue, and known for his dialogues with the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh. He was also a renowned specialist of Zen Daisetz Teitaro Suziki. Father Christian de Chergé (1937-1996), a French Trappist monk of the Cistercian order of strict observance, was one of the seven Tibhirine monks living in Algeria and taken hostage and then assassinated in 1996. These monks did not only want to get to know another religion, but to welcome it into their spiritual life. Others subsequently followed their example. Bernard Rérolle is a Belgian Marist priest, who was initiated into Zen in the eighties and who has been teaching the practice of Zazen for the last twenty years in a Christian framework. Pierre de Béthune, a Belgian Benedictine monk and Prior of the Monastery of Clerlande in Belgium, has been practicing Zen meditation for many years. He is responsible for the monastic inter-religious dialogue (DIM), which encourages spiritual contacts and exchanges between Catholic and Buddhist monks. They privilege inter-religious meetings that benefit from a spiritual exchange. Everyone concerned appreciates this unique chance to learn a little more of the potentialities of our own Western traditions. The association of the Gospels with spiritual techniques and other values that originated in Asia finally seem to lead to this full and transcendental liberty that can be found above and beyond all cultural differences, purely exterior.

An international magazine, Dilatato Corde, had its origin in the "Inter-religious Monastic Dialogue" (IMD) and was put on line in January 2011 as a means of information and reflection on the dialogue of spiritual or religious experience, a dialogue where "people, entrenched in their religious traditions share their spiritual riches for seeking God or the Absolute". The founders of this magazine therefore wish to collaborate in the development of theology through the meeting up of religions. Theology has greatly developed since the Vatican II Council, but nevertheless it still encounters great difficulties and obstacles. Their conviction is that in order to go forward it is indispensable to have even more spiritual experiences, because it is only by using such experiences as a base that subsequent reflections can be fecund.

The Dalai Lama often speaks about exemplary Christian charity, which Buddhists should also practice. On many occasions he has underlined that Buddhists should implicate themselves further at the social level, as do their Christian brothers and sisters.

Moreover, every practicing Buddhist firmly insists on the importance of the Master, and his (or her) personality and role as an agent of the cohesion of the community. A Buddhist community makes no sense without its relationship with a spiritual Master, who assembles a certain number of disciples around him (or her). It is a true guide for interior life and illuminates the disciples through teaching and practical advice. The Master has already gone further along the way and lived through the experience before the disciples. Because of this the Master is like a mirror for them. The spiritual

influence of the great Masters, as well as the example of their charisma, has also played an important role in the propagation of the teaching of the Buddha. The transmission of the Master to the disciple ensures that the teaching is authentic, living and topical through the testimony of those who express it. Inscription in a line of belief, in a line of believers who have received this fundamental experience of enlightenment, is a characteristic of Buddhism. Each Bonze (Buddhist monk) Tibetan Lama or Zen Master begins his teaching by referring to his own Masters, and by showing the line of descent that links him (or her) to the far-off founders of the lines, and indicates that everything goes back, from Master to disciple, to the Buddha himself. It is a transmission of life. Each time there is a transmission from continent to continent it is centered on the foundation experience of a school or a structure. Each time, it is the attitude of the awakening of the historic Buddha that is being lived through.

A real master should therefore talk about his belonging to a line, his inscription in it. Institutional power depends entirely on the legitimate recognition of the authenticity of a line or that of a transmission, as in the reincarnation of a great Lama in Tibetan Buddhism. This is what the Chinese perfectly understood when trying to weaken the religious authority of the Dalai Lama by creating divisions in the heart of the Tibetan monastic community centered on the recognition of the reincarnation of the most important heads of lineages, such as the Panchen Lama.

The Role of Buddhism faced with the understanding of the nature of the mind

Every practicing Buddhist tries to understand the nature of his or her mind. The development of the mind is the result of training the mind, which itself breaks down into two stages:

- The mental concentration or pacification that gradually calms interior agitation and mental opacity. This preliminary phase prepares the ground for more advanced practices;
- The superior vision that leads to the uprooting of the egocentric hold which is the basis of the cycle of existences. It concerns the perception of the unreality of appearances, like a reflection in a mirror, of the sounds and thoughts of the ego. This does not signify the cessation of the manifestation but rather comprehension that the manifestation is devoid of intrinsic or autonomous reality.

Furthermore, the accumulation of virtues is fundamental for all practicing Buddhists because it facilitates meditation and enables better practice. The absence of accumulation of virtues makes spiritual elevation difficult and the ego constitutes the greatest obstacle. When the ego is reduced, it becomes easier to concentrate because one is protected from interior disturbances that lead at the same time to dispersing exterior disturbances. The exercise of compassion is naturally facilitated and procures the necessary calm for concentration. When one is not fixed on oneself, on the "me" as an independent and privileged entity, the mind opens up and can probe more easily to discover its proper nature, which is above and beyond words and concepts. This nature, specific to each living being, whoever and whatever it is, can then suddenly materialize and be real.

Moreover, the accumulation of virtues is double; there is that which is ordinary, of ordinary people, and that which is not ordinary, of people having accomplished realizations. The effects of

actions carried out by beings having great qualities are different by nature and infinitely vaster. Progress becomes rapid and colossal. The acts of a being perfectly realized, who becomes Buddha, are without limit as much in quality as in quantity.

In order to reach awakening, a gradual way is proposed. Thus, compassion engenders calm and a form of patience can be practiced in a very useful way in daily life. It also becomes possible to learn a deeper form of patience, which makes it possible to no longer be affected by those who hurt us or do bad things to us. This is an excellent basis for meditation.

To pass from concentration to meditation, it is again necessary to possess memory and vigilance. By assuring continuity, the memory enables the mind not to wander about from right to left and at the same preserves us from the non-virtues outside of the meditation period. Vigilance is like a soldier posted on guard, who protects us from torpor and agitation. At this point, the mind can start to enter into Samadhi. Conjointly, the practice of morality renders the mind firmer and more stable. This morality is a kind of protection. Perseverance and regularity lead to the progressive development of calm and stability. Force and habit finally enable access to the final stages of mental calm.

This mental calm is extremely powerful and procures physical and mental fluidity that leads to delight and the capacity to become absorbed on an object in perfect concentration. No disturbance, nor even the effort of remaining concentrated, which consists of a simple application at the beginning of the session, can suddenly arise. It is then time to direct the mind towards the practice of penetrating vision, towards the development of interior wisdom. Wisdom is necessary all along the way, as much as for the accumulation of ordinary virtues as well as non-ordinary virtues. For the first, it is burgeoning wisdom that encourages the accumulation of ordinary virtues, which themselves enable the development of a more and more profound and powerful wisdom. Progressively, actions are improved.

The deepening of our experience of the true nature of the mind has the effect of the world losing its influence, and becoming unable to harm us. The ultimate result is the gaining of perfect awakening. One is then totally freed of the cycle of conditioned existences, as well as the associated suffering. At the same time, one acquires the power, to help others because compassion, which is the desire to succeed in liberating others from their suffering through one's actions, has been engendered beforehand.

A being liberated from his or her suffering does not become reborn in the Samara, nor goes through reincarnation, and can no longer be affected by suffering. A being who becomes a Buddha, becomes capable of eliminating the suffering of others in the same way as removing a thorn from one's foot. Compassion and wisdom are thus the two wings that enable each living being to reach complete awakening.

Contribution to the Development of Citizens' Responsibility

The notion of Karma is fundamental in Buddhism. It is thought to be the most important teaching of the Buddha. In actual fact, acts lead to results. Thus, all action produces a result, agreeable or disagreeable. If acts are contaminated, the results are painful. This life is not the result of chance because every phenomenon has its own causes and conditions. This life is not without causes and

neither does it have causes exterior to itself. Our sufferings are not due to others, just as happiness is not offered as a gift. It is the Karma created in a continuity of existences that produces what is experienced in this life. It is why the Buddha taught it is necessary to keep away from non-virtuous actions. And all bad actions are due to a lack of wisdom or to ignorance.

The absence of correct view leads to the creation of the ego and to the link to it. It is why ignorance is the root fault and the fundamental blemish: ignorance produces ego and engenders the duality of oneself and others – this prolongs itself through attachment to oneself and hostility towards others. All actions become contaminated and the cycle of uncontrolled rebirth of Samsara is experienced. Suffering is omnipresent and can become extreme according to the degree of ignorance and contaminated actions.

When Karma becomes mature, there is no possibility of escape. It is like being reborn on the human plane; after our birth, we must all experience the human form, where it pleases us or not, whether we are man or woman. We had better get used to it. It is in thinking of the transitory character of this existence that we can avoid a too strong attachment to it. In actual fact, being reborn as a man in one life, and then as a woman in another, places us in the perspective of equality in the long term. This can certainly avoid our having to consider the superiority of one category over another.

The study of Karma is certainly one of the fields that necessitate a thorough study. Three types of teaching are given on the consequences of acts in the Lamdré (the way and its results, principal teaching of the Sakya tradition, one of the four principal schools of Tibetan Buddhism:

1. effects arriving at maturity,
2. (i) the effect similar to the cause and (ii) the consequence of habits and
3. the effect that affects the environment in which beings are reborn.

This approach is a powerful means of making individuals responsible, because they feel responsible for their acts. At the same time, a possibility of salvation appears: it is the same for every one of living beings, which firmly places them again in equality in the long term. A noble common ideal is born! The perspective of a happy future begins to emerge.

The meditative experience and its observable beneficial effects recognized on those who meditate

We can observe through our own experience that the state of our mind plays a predominant role in our everyday life, for our moral and physical well-being. If we maintain our mind in a state of calm and peace, disturbances caused by exterior conditions are limited. On the other hand, it is very difficult for someone whose mental state is agitated to stay calm. This signifies that our mental attitude is a determining factor of our experience of happiness and good health or even suffering.

In everyday life, we can observe, above all at a crude level, that our mind is strictly linked to the physiological state of our body, and that it depends on it. In the same way that our state of mind, according to whether it is depressed or joyous, influences our physical health, our physical

state influences our mind. The Tantras deal with the mind and the awareness in various degrees of subtlety, as well as the centers of specific energy in the interior of the body (the Chakras).These energetic centers play an extremely important role in the growth or the decrease of the different emotional states of our mind. Because of the close relationship between the body and the mind, and the existence of the physiological centers in our body, the physical exercise of yoga and the application of specific meditative mind training techniques can have beneficial effects on health. Thus, doctors and scientists have undertaken significant research on the relationship body/mind and on applications in the comprehension of the nature of our physical and mental well-being. These research projects on Tibetan Buddhists practicing meditation have been pursued over several years. They have revealed a lowering of blood pressure, of respiratory and cardiac rhythm, of consumption of oxygen, and a relaxing effect induced by meditation. Thanks to our knowledge of the body and the mind, there is no doubt that our mental and physical health is enhanced. Certain scientists consider Buddhism more as a science of the mind rather than a religion and this is not without justification.

Buddhism should take note of this responsibility, as it is the only tradition in the world to have studied and reflected so much on the nature of the mind, and above all accumulated an incomparable experience of meditation, the effects of which on those who meditate are undeniable and recognized.

Is the acculturation of Buddhism in the West perennial?

We can distinguish five great factors of acculturation in a religious tradition in a new cultural area:

- Recognition by public authorities and other religions;
- The foundation of venues of transmission of tradition;
- The training of native Masters;
- Translations and adaptation of worship and rituals;
- The assimilation of teaching in the mental, philosophic and religious universe of the new cultural area contacted.

We can verify that the three first factors have been fulfilled. As for the fourth factor, translators are confronted with the difficulty of the language and above all the difficulty of transposing the teachings of one conceptual universe into another. A word apparently similar in one language often hides another philosophic connotation. It should be noted that the acculturation of Buddhism in Tibet was possible because a script was invented in the 7th century of our era by Tibetans, with the aim of translating the teaching of the Buddha from Sanskrit.

As for the fifth factor, the mental universe and the philosophical and religious culture common to Asians are different from the mental and conceptual universe of the West. Only silent meditation carries few risks of cultural misunderstanding. However, if we are speaking of the Master/disciple relationship, of devotion towards the Master or obedience towards the Master, cultural misunderstandings and problems of interpretation spring up.

Problems of reciprocal seduction then arise and of disciples who follow to the letter the prescriptions of Masters who are not always very competent, or even refuse to obey the Master, being impregnated with the modern cult of the individual and the development of self.

One of the most marked examples is probably prostration, that even in Asia is not always practiced everywhere in the same way. For example, in India or in Tibet, it has always been a current use to mark respect and greeting. But in countries like China or Thailand, this practice hardly ever occurs. In Tibet, the practice of prostration has even become a Yoga practice, very complete and profound. It seems possible that in France and in Europe these practices do not enjoy the success that they have elsewhere. Worse, such practices could, perhaps, be detrimental to the acculturation of Buddhism in the West. It is probable that they will disappear of their own accord, in total indifference.

In the East, only an elite in the monasteries studied in depth the teachings of the Buddha and were in search of Nirvana. This esoteric Buddhism probably also concerns an elite in France and in Europe. However, its philosophy, its moral and universal values, its techniques of meditation to pacify the mind, these religious rituals will continue to lighten the way of numerous individuals, whether from the West or the East.

Buddhism not only advocates a wisdom of happiness but also offers the concrete means to achieve it, techniques and methods claiming to enable individuals to explore their own interior universe, to carry out work on themselves and to heal emotional distress. In short, it proposes a spiritual revolution. The world would change if each individual started by improving him-or herself. The lack of comprehension and mastering of mental and emotional phenomena is one of the shortcomings of the West, which is much more attached to the understanding and mastering of phenomena exterior to mankind. Conversely, Buddhism is a veritable science of the intimate, a science of the mind, a technique that enables men or women without fail to surpass themselves well beyond their wildest imagination.

The mental construct of what constitutes humanity, the junction between materialism and spirituality, both material and spiritual wealth, and the balance of productivism and sobriety, all constitute a major challenge for the hope of mankind yet to be born.

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The Most Outstanding Bhiksunī Contribution to Education in Contemporary China

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Introduction:

Master Nun Longlian (隆莲法师) (1909-2006) is the first outstanding *bhiksunī* in contemporary China. She was vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, and abbess of two nunneries in the southwestern province of Sichuan (四川): Aidao tang (爱道堂) and Tiesiang ci (铁象寺).[1]

Master Longlian's high academic achievements were known far and near. She served as researcher of the Buddhist Art Institute of China, and she also served in many other academic positions. She is the author of numerous books and essays. Aside from her profound knowledge of Buddhism, she speaks English and Tibetan, which is rare knowledge in China. She was one of the compilers of *A Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary*. Master Longlian was not only an exalted Buddhist scholar, but also worked hard to re-establish dual ordination in China, which was absent from the Chinese Buddhist tradition for centuries.

Her devotion to Dharma teaching is great. She declares, "I am destined to live with blackboards and chalk, as a teacher, my entire life." When the status of Buddhist nuns was low in China, she realized that in order to improve the status within society, education was essential for nuns. She helped establish the Sichuan Buddhist Nuns' College (SBNC) in 1983, which was the first contemporary college for Buddhist Nuns to be accepted by the Chinese government. It was first housed in a temple named Tiexiangsi (Iron Statue Temple) in the southern outskirts of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province. Master Longlian served as president.

The Chinese *bhiksunīs* education has developed greatly over the past 30 years. Many *bhiksunīs* have graduated from this college, and are now working in different corners at home and abroad, receiving great acclaim from the society. But, still some problems remain in the present situation. What should they do? What can they offer to society? In the 21st century, how to solve the problems and discover the direction of the development of *bhiksunīs'* education is a long and difficult task.

A brief account of Master nun Longlian's early life

Ven. Nun Longlian was born in Leshan town, Sichuan province. Her secular name was You Yongkang.[2] Her father and her grandfathers were famous scholars. Since her father could not

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1 Si or Tang is the Chinese word for the temple, si or tang instead of the English equivalent will be used throughout this paper.

2 This order follows the traditional Chinese style for names, which places family name first followed by given name. All Chinese names throughout this paper will follow this format.

afford to provide full education for all seven of his children, he provided home education which he preferred anyway. After leaving school at the age of twelve, Yongkang studied secular subjects at home, including math, physics, and painting. Being brought up in an intellectual Chinese family, Yongkang acquired deep foundation of classical literature, poetry and calligraphy. In addition, she learned English from an American teacher, and Tibetan language（藏文）from Ven. Fazun. Later, she learned traditional Chinese medicine. At the age of twenty, she started teaching at Chendu Women's Normal School. In the meantime, Ven. Longlian published her first book: The first book on my dedication to learning[3] (《志学初集》). She was known in her province, deservedly, as a talented woman and earned the title "Number One Female Scholar" (女状元).[4]

In 1939, the government of Sichuan set three examinations for those aspiring to be educational administrators, civil servants, or senior civil servants. Yongkang not only passed all exams for each of the three designations but she also came first in all three. She became the first woman active in the provincial government. She was appointed as an editor-translator at the provincial editing and translating bureau but surprised everyone four years later by relinquishing her prestigious position to become a Buddhist nun at Aidaotang. Yongkang became a nun because she was disillusioned with her career and disappointed in love. Yongkang later maintained that her decision came about because of her faith in Buddhism and because of the Buddhist influence in her family.

Her family had indeed been deeply involved with Buddhism: Yongkang's maternal grandfather was president of the local Buddhist association. Her maternal grandmother and mother were devout Buddhists, and her father also knew a great deal about Buddhism. When she was a child, she began to show an interest in Buddhism. In 1921, Yongkang took refuge in the Three Gems (Buddha佛, Dharma法 and Sangha僧). Five years later, she found employment as a teacher in Chendu. While in Chendu, she took advantage of every opportunity to hear Buddhist lectures and teachings on the scriptures. In this way, she was able to study with many famous Buddhist masters, including Fazun, Nenghai, and Wang Enyang. Her first work on Buddhism was called A brief discussion on Mahāyānasamgraha (《摄大乘论疏略述》).[5]

In 1941, she became a nun at Love Dharma Nunnery, and in that same year, she received full ordination (具足戒). In 1942, she served as dean of Sichuan Lotus School Nunnery which belongs to the Pure Land tradition, and at that time she took refuge and learned from Master Guru Nenghai. By the end of the 1940s, she was the abbess of two nunneries in Chengdu(成都): Aidaotang (爱道堂) and Tiesiangsi (铁象寺), and maintained these positions throughout her life.

Master Longlian has said that in her remaining years she wishes to make a Buddhist college for nuns to foster women Buddhist leaders in China. In 1983, Master Longlian finally established a Buddhist college for nuns at the Tiesiangsi. This was the first institution of higher education devoted to the training of female Buddhist scholars. She was president of the college and taught courses such as Buddhist knowledge and law, and sutras in classical Chinese. She declared, "I am destined to live with blackboards and chalk, as a teacher, my entire life."[6] At 88, the abbess was still active, shuttling between the two nunneries. Ordinarily, she lived in Tiesiangsi and went to Adiaotang on

[3] Her first book was a collected of her original poems.

[4] In Chinese this is a very prestigious title, Chinese - English dictionary defines状元 as "Number One Scholar; the title conferred on the person with the best score in the highest imperial examination." Yongkang is female, so she earned the title "Number One Female Scholar" (女状元).

[5] This was her commentary about Mahāyānasamgraha, this was the fundamental and based book of yogacara.

[6] Qiu Shanshan, Biography of Venerable Longlian, Fuzhou, Fujian Meishu Chubanshe, 1997, p67

weekends to teach the scriptures to the resident nuns, as well as to lay Buddhist followers. Her daily schedule was full. Sometimes she taught for half a day without a break. Master Longlian devoted herself to the education of Buddhist nuns for many years. Her devotion to Buddhist Dharma was great, and will be remembered forever.

Master Longlian is the author of numerous books and essays. Some elucidated Master Nenghai's teachings; some are based on notes of teaching she received from other masters; some are translations from Tibetan, while others are related to the *Vinaya* and other Buddhist scriptures. An accomplished poet, painter, and educator, Master Longlian was awarded the Teaching Culture Award and a special copy of the *Taisho Buddhist Canon* by the Japanese Buddhist Association in 1982. As a Buddhist scholar, Master Longlian was the only woman invited by the chief editor and the ministry of culture of Sri Lanka to contribute to the section on Chinese Buddhism in a Buddhist encyclopedia that they were compiling. She was also proficient in the Tibetan language, and one of the compilers of the *Great Chinese–Tibetan Dictionary* (汉藏字典) published in the 1950s. She is generally regarded as the most exemplary nun in contemporary China.

At the age of 97, 6:45am, 9 November 2006, Master Longlian passed away at Love Dharma Nunnery, Chengdu Province, China. She was vice president of the Buddhist Association of China (中国佛教协会副会长), and president of SNBC.

Master Longlian re-establishes dual ordination

Master Longlian was not only an exalted Buddhist scholar, but also worked hard to establish ordination for Tibetan nuns. There are four-fold assembly of disciples in Buddhism: *bhiksu, bhiksunīs, upasaka and upasika*. In Tibetan Buddhism the assembly of *bhiksunīs* is non-existent. Buddhist women was just allowed to become novice（*Samaneni*）who from home to homelessness. There were also only *samaneni* in Tiexiangsi.

In the autumn of 1948, the first full ordination ceremony, in which Tibetan nuns received *bhiksunīs* precepts, was held at Tiexiangsi in Sichuan and supervised by *bhiksunī* Longlian.[7] So the Tiexiangsi is the only Nunnery of full ordination for Tibeten *bhiksunīs*.

Master Longlian also worked hard to re-establish dual ordination in China which was absent from the Chinese Buddhist tradition for centuries.

In 1949, on the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Master Longlian and Master Nenghai invited the *Vinaya* Master Guanyi to teach monastic discipline to nuns. At the end of the teachings, Guanyi conferred the *Siksamana* (probationary) precepts on the whole community. According to the *Vinaya* texts, the term of these vows is two years, after which the nuns were supposed to receive full ordination in the *Dharmagupta* tradition,[8] the *Vinaya* School followed by Chinese Buddhists. The correct way for nuns to receive full ordination follows the dual ordination procedure, which was first introduced into China from Sri Lanka in 434 C.E. According to these rules, nuns should receive the nun precepts first from the nun community and then from the monk

[7] Nimalamu, Tibetan Nunnery in Chengdu: Tiexiangsi research, Journal of Kangding Nationality Teachers College, Vol.12 No.2 (June, 2003).p10.

[8] Dharmagupta code of 348 rules for nuns is used in China. It is chanted on the observance days at the full and new moons.

community. The Chinese term for this ordination ritual is called *erbu sengjie* (二部僧戒). Ordination is needed by the two sanghas. Unfortunately, the nuns did not follow this dual ritual when they received their own ordination, but later Master Longlian decided to resurrect this procedure in China.

At the Fourth National People's Congress of the Buddhism Association of China in December 1980, Master Longlian expressed her wish to re-establish dual ordination. In 1982, she finally fulfilled her goal. Master Longlian held the first ceremonies since the 1950s for the full ordination of nuns. Only eight nuns received full ordination at this time. The ordination procedures of Tiexiangsi follow the Chinese tradition. Another full ordination ceremony was held in the winter of 1986. On 13 June 1993, when Master Longlian was invited to participate in the memorial service for the 1925th anniversary of the establishment of the White Horse Monastery in Luoyang (洛阳白马寺), the first Buddhist temple ever established in China, she presided over the biggest ceremony for the full ordination of Chinese Buddhist nuns. More than 400 nuns attended the ceremony. Between 1982 and 1997 more than five major ceremonies were held.

Master Longlian and her educational career

Master Longlian was a brilliant nun and scholar. After the Cultural Revolution, Master Longlian restored the nunnery Aidao Temple where she used to teach both nuns and lay Buddhist women. As more women joined the community, seeing the lack of young successors in Chinese Buddhism, she realized that in order to improve the status of Buddhist nuns in society, education was essential. At the Fourth National People's Congress of the Buddhism Association of China in December 1980, Master Longlian solemnly offered a proposal to found a nuns institute, in view that there were no regular Buddhist school to train nuns in China at that time. Her proposal met with Mr. Zhao Puchu, the president of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), as well as other eminent monks.

In 1982, President Zhao Puchu, accompanied by Master Ming Yang (who was the vise president of BAC), went to Sichuan on an inspection tour. During their visit, President Zhao Puchu decided to set up Sichuan Buddhist Nuns' Institute. In 1983, Master Longlian's proposal was finally approved by the authorities. The Third Plenum of the 11th after the implementation of religious policies, according to the "Office of the State Council transmitted the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau on the nun religious institutions in the notice to seek instructions" (Guoban Fa 1982, 60), and the "Sichuan Provincial People's Government Agreed to operate on the four approved religious institutions" (Chuanfu letter 1983, 14). And so on the spirit of the document, China's first advanced Nuns' Institute, called Sichuan Buddhist Nuns' Institute, was officially established.

In order to ensure the early completion of the college, Master Longlian devoted all her savings to construction. Under the great efforts of all, the dormitories and classrooms, the Hall of Jade Buddha and Library were built up one after another. After years of effort, these buildings have come into being. The stored books donated by the Buddhist Association include *Taisho Tripitaka, Zhonghua Tripitaka* and *fangshan* stone *Tripitaka,* etc. President Zhao Puchu endowed the following name for the college: Sichuan Buddhist Nuns' College.[9]

[9] President Zhao Puchu was famous for endowing the names of many temples in China because he is a leader of Chinese Buddhism, and a famed calligrapher.

SBNC was finally inaugurated on 1 November 1984. It is the first and only college of higher learning for nuns in China. Mr. Zhao Puchu was its honorary president while Master Longlian was the active president. Buddhist Kuanling from Wenshusi assumed the role of vice president, and Master Pianneng from Wuyuosi assumed the role of the dean.

Master Longlian, influenced by the situation of Buddhism in China, divided the nuns training into three purposes:

(1) To train temple management personnel

(2) To train Buddhist teaching personnel

(3) To train Buddhist studying personnel

After students graduate, usually the minimum requirement for each student is for them to become management personnel of a temple. So the nuns are not only expected to learn Buddhism and cultural knowledge, but are also expected to learn many of the specific management methods, such as how to hold various types of ceremonies, how to establish formal financial accounts, etc.

SBNC offers courses in Buddhist studies, social sciences and humanities. The courses are taught on the basic theories of the major Buddhist schools and important Buddhist scriptures: history of Buddhism in India, history of Buddhism in China and Tibet, Buddhist regulations and rituals. Social science and humanities courses include modern and traditional Chinese arts and literature, Chinese history, Chinese philosophy, western philosophy, Chinese and Tibetan languages, calligraphy, sports and politics. The Buddhist studies are covered Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism. The first course students mainly study Chinese Buddhism, whereas senior-level courses are organized like the *geshe*[10] study programs of Tibetan Buddhist institutes. At the post-graduate level, classes on Tibetan literature and Tibetan Buddhist texts are also offered.

The Sichuan Buddhist nunnery is the only nunnery in China following the *Gelugpu*[11] (格鲁派) tradition. Tiexiangsi, reflects an unusual mixture of elements from different Buddhist traditions. The students here learn the doctrines, *Vinayas* and history of the three language sects of Buddhism. Life in Tiexiangsi presents also the same unusual juxtaposition of Chinese and Tibetan elements. The various activities in the monastic day are designated by Chinese words. Everyday life in Tiexiangsi follows the usual routine of Chinese monitories. But the meditation and scripture chanting are Tibetan in origin, the meditation practiced by the community is called *Contemplation on the Three Refuges* (三皈依观).[12] Longlian has written a handbook describing this method as "a basic practice of Tibetan meditation." The *bhiksunīs* practice meditation every afternoon. Every morning, the *bhiksunīs* assemble in the main hall to chant *Guru Puja* (上师供), a popular guru yoga text in the *gelupa* school. Longlian explain tantric practices associated with the Guru Puja. At the heart of this practice is the realization one's own guru. Every evening, *bhiksunīs* chant the *Original Five-syllable Mantra of Manjusri* (文殊五字根本真言).[13] This text written by Nenghai, who said to received

[10] *Geshe* has successfully completed a Buddhist education in Tibetan tradition. In *Gelugpa, Geshe* usually requires 20 or 25 years of study.

[11] *Gelugpu* founded in Tibet in the 14th century by the monk scholar Tsongkhapa. The *Gelugpu* tradition is associated with the Dalai lama and the Panchen Lama, and has been the most influential school in Tibet since the 17th century.

[12] The text divides the meditative path into three stages: a preparatory practice; an analytical concentration on the Three Jewels, the Four Noble Truths, and impermanence; and a ling esoteric concentration consisting of many intertwined visualization practices.

[13] An exoteric section, an explanation of the three trainings in *Vinaya, dhyāna,* and *prajnā.*

the approval of manjusri himself as the master was absorbed in meditation on Mt. Wutai. The students respect the Nenghai, Manjusri, and Tsongkhapa, which follow traditional Tibetan forms. In addition, another scripture chanting as is the rite performed on religious feast days, the *tsog foeering* (会供).[14]

Tiexiangsi focuses on training *bhiksunīs* on Buddhist morality, mediation, and wisdom rather than receiving visitors from around the world. To provide a quite environment for the *bhiksunīs*, Tiexiangsi is not open to tourists. It is also a "closed" nunnery, which means that it is for the nuns only and is not open to laypeople for devotions. This is in contrast with other monasteries (Aidaotang Nunnery, for example), which welcome laypeople for daily meditation and other activities. Outsiders rarely come to Tiexiangsi**.** The students of this nunnery do not offer Buddhist services to lay people for money. Their expenses are covered by the school. The source of funding of this nunnery comes from the Government. The temple also received some donations from big temples. According to Master Longlian, Buddhism is a kind of education. The Buddhist temple is not a place of business or a place of tourism, so this institute is not open to the public for pilgrimage, or other Buddhist services. Commercialism leads to corruption in the Buddhist monastery and could be widespread in contemporary Chinese society. Thus, without the commercialism, the institute can remain as a sacred place for Buddhist practice. It doesn't mix Buddhism with business.

In the fall of 1987, the first batch of students graduated from this Sichuan Buddhist Nunnery. Some of them continued their studies in the same school for another three years. They started their teaching and research work in various localities in China. Others returned to the monasteries in the Buddhist associations.

In 1990, Master Longlian taught three classes: advanced class for research, as well as intermediate and elementary class. The schooling for each class is three years. She also set up a training class in Aidaotang with three years schooling. The students attending this preparatory class may continue their studies at the Sichuan Buddhist nuns' institute. Therefore, there are four levels of classes with 12 years of schooling at this institute.

SBNC was the well-known Buddhist College in china when Master Longlian was power because of her charisma influence. Many nuns have graduated from this institute, and are now working in different corners at home and abroad. They receive great acclaim from the society.

Difficulties and problems in development of the SBNC

Master Longlian founded SBNC and managed it well, which has been praised and nation wide. But Master Longlian was deterring in energy as she was more than 90 years old. When she left the Buddhist institute affairs to the students, SBNC faced many challenges. Some new disputes are continually growing. Her students fractioned into two different education attitudes: One group wants to inherit Master Longlian's experience which focuses on both Exoteric and Esoteric Sects. Another group, including the new president of SBNC, wants to focus on the Mahayana Eight Sects (Exoteric Sects), and play down the Esoteric practice. This is the greatest change to the college's curriculum. At the same time, there still remain some problems in the college, such as the lack of funds, lack of well-trained teachers and able persons, lack of sources and so forth. The new

[14] The monks or nuns celebrate the Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, typical of Chinese Buddhism.

divergences mingled with old contradictions have seriously restricted the college's educational development. When Minnan Buddhist Nuns' College and Wutai Pushousi Buddhist Nuns' College develop quickly, SBNC went into decline because of discordant voices among the students, and not much improvement in development.

Reflection on educational system in SBNC

As the older generation gradually leaves the world, the younger generation is left to carry on the traditions, but it has not produced the same level of charismatic leaders or scholars who could shoulder the heavy responsibilities for future propagation and research. Now, many local temples have set up their own Buddhist nuns' colleges for the training of the young. After Master Longlian established the SBNC, many Buddhist nuns' colleges have been constructed throughout the China. All new generations have a good chance to study Buddhism at Nuns' Colleges. They receive both Buddhist and secular higher education.

Bhiksunīs who have graduated from such colleges go on to serve in different capacities, they establish the temple, promote Buddhist education, or are dedicated to charitable activities, etc. *Bhiksunīs'* education in china has developed greatly over the past 30 years and continues to develop, but there is still room for improvement, as the colleges still face challenges. All the colleges have similar problems as Mr. Wang Leiquan discussed in 1993.[15] First, the individual colleges don't have any coordination in their programs. Usually, these colleges are small and far from being comprehensive. Second, these colleges mainly admit monks and nuns as students. They tend to neglect the education of lay Buddhists. Third, the leaders of these Buddhist colleges are not bold enough to introduce good experience and research work from oversees. Due to their limited sources, they are not aware of other Buddhist studies in the world, they lack contact with the outside, especially lack contact with Buddhist studies worldwide. Forth, the syllabus seems old and incomplete as many topics are missing, including women's studies, sociology, languages, comparative religions, ethics, etc. These problems exist for both *bhiksus* and *bhiksunīs* in contemporary china. In the 21st century, how to solve the problems and discover the direction of the development of *bhiksunīs'* education is a long and difficult task.

Conclusion

Master Longlian was not only an exalted Buddhist scholar, but one who also worked hard to establish ordination for *bhiksunīs*, including both Tibeten *bhiksunīs* and Mahāyāna *bhiksunīs*. The first full ordination ceremony, in which Tibetan nuns received *bhiksunī* precepts, was held at Tiexiangsi in 1948 and supervised by *Bhiksunīs* Longlian. Tiexiangsi is the only Nunnery of full ordination for Tibeten *bhiksunīs* Master Longlian also worked hard to re-establish dual ordination in China, which was absent from the Chinese Buddhist tradition for centuries. In 1982, Master Longlian held the first ceremonies since the 1950s for the full ordination of *bhiksunīs*.

Master Longlian's experience focuses on both Exoteric and Esoteric Sects. She was proficient in the Tibetan language, translated Tibetan Buddhist scriptures. and was one of the compilers

[15] Deng Zhimei, Review of Chinese Buddhist Education in 20th Century, *Buddhist cultural*, No.6, 1996

of the *Great Chinese–Tibetan Dictionary* (汉藏字典) published in the 1950s. She devoted her life to spreading Tibeten Buddhist teachings in new land Sichuan. The Tiexiangsi is the only nunnery in China following the *Gelugpu* (格鲁派) tradition. Tiexiangsi reflects the Chinese Buddhist tradition of its cultural setting as well as the Tibetan Buddhist teachings in China. Life in Tiexiangsi presents the unusual juxtaposition of Chinese and Tibetan elements. Everyday life in Tiexiangsi follows the usual routine of Chinese monitories. But the meditation and scripture chanting are Tibetan in origin, such as *Contemplation on the Three Refuges* (三皈依观), *Guru Puja* (上师供), *Original Five-syllable Mantra of Manjusri* (文殊五字根本真言), and *tsog foeerin*g (会供). It can be seen in the daily life of the nunnery, the substance and content of the nun's practice – meditation, chanting services, and tantric teachings are all of Tibetan origin.

Master Longlian founded the first Buddhist Nuns' College in China, and had made outstanding contributions in the development of nuns' education. There are 14 Buddhist Nuns' Colleges or Institutes constructed, such as Minnan Buddhist Nuns' College and Pushou Bhiksunī Vinaya College. As we have seen in recent times, *bhiksunīs* in China are displaying strong determination to be involved in the teachings of the Buddha, and, together bhiksus, have shared the important task of educating the talented *bhiksunīs* in order to preserve and promote Buddhism.

Buddhist Nuns' College in Tiexiangsi Nunnery has evolved in relation to government policy shifts toward religion in China. In 1966, the onset of the Cultural Revolution had a disastrous effect on all aspects of the society in China, including religion. All religious sites were closed. All the nuns left Tiexiangsi, some of the buildings and sacred images sustained heavy damage. They moved to Aidaotang Nunnery, and stayed there until 1979 living side-by-side with workers who were employed in nearby factories or the government workshop in the nunnery complex.

After the end of the Cultural Revelation in 1979, the communist party insists on a new policy of freedom in religious beliefs. Five religions have since been allowed to operate under the auspices of the patriotic associations. Monks and nuns were gradually to return to religious life, Longlian and her community regained most of the property associated with Tiexiangsi. They assisted by government funds, began restoring the damaged buildings and Buddha images.

In 1983, Zhao Puchu, President of BAC, agreed to set up Sichuan Buddhist Nuns' Institute, and authorities approved the Master Longlian's proposal to set up this college. The Third Plenum of the 11th after the implementation of religious policies, according to the "Office of the State Council transmitted the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau" and the "Sichuan Provincial People's Government", and so, on the spirit of the document, China's first Sichuan Buddhist Nuns' College was officially established in Tiexiangsi.

The foundation of SBNC is just an individual case in the history of Buddhist education in China, nevertheless, the real value of its research lies in its ability to inspire Chinese contemporary Buddhist education as a whole, and the task now is to re-examine the real problems and resolve the issues of Buddhist Education and the society.

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Buddhist Tolerance for Peaceful Co-Existence of Asian Nations

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1. Introduction

As technology and sciences have significantly progressed these days, Information Technology (IT) is one example providing people around the world an opportunity to communicate rapidly like they are living in the same village, so called "global village" or "globalization". On the one hand, globalization becomes a network connecting humans around the world to learn and understand each other. On the other hand, the globalization may also lead to religious and cultural conflicts widely and rapidly, depending on how people use it.

For Asian people to live harmoniously in globalization, I believe that key success factors are to learn, to accept and to understand one another through "tolerance", which is the common essence of Asian way of peaceful living for countless of time. In this article, I would like to present "tolerance" in Buddhist perspective for peaceful co-existence in Asian nations.

2. Buddhist Doctrines on Tolerance

The world "tolerance" in this paper includes open-mindedness to recognize other religions and cultures without judgment, prejudice or bias. It is the fact that if one is open-minded, he will have more space in his mind for other religions and cultures. On the contrary, those who are narrow-minded, it is impossible for him to embrace other religions and cultures. According to Buddhism, the narrow-heartedness is the result of attachment to views or beliefs, the defilements that should be aware. Even for Buddhists, the Buddha never taught his disciples to attach to Buddhism with blind faith although it is tempted for those who believe in any religion to attach to what they believe, with blind faith, not wisdom. Blind attachment may lead to pride viewing that only their religion or belief is superior to that of others. Such view obstructs people to learn. In Buddhism, the realization is impossible when people still have strong attachment or cling to their religion or view with blind faith.

> Monks, if anyone should speak in blame of me, of the Teaching or of the Order, you should not be angry, resentful or upset on that account. If you were to be angry or displeased at such blame, that would only be a hindrance to you. For if others blame me, the Teaching or the Order, and you are angry or displeased, can you recognize whether what they say is right or wrong?....Monks, if anyone should speak in praise of me, of the Teaching or of the Order, you should not on that account be pleased, happy or elated. If you were to be pleased, happy or elated at such praise, that would only be a hindrance to you. If others

> praise me, the Teaching or the Order, and you are , you should acknowledge the truth of what is true…[1]

This statement shows that the Buddha never encouraged Buddhists to blindly attach to even the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order (Community). He would like his disciples to contemplate on disparagement or praise with their wisdom. In case of being disparaged, one should not, on the sudden, be angry, but listen deeply to such dislike discourses. There might be good advice beneath. On the contrary, when the Triple Gem is praised, one should not be driven in such pleasing words without wisely contemplation on the correctness of what is heard.

The Buddha did not encourage his followers to have mere faith in anything without proper understanding. One day a group of people called Kalamas told him they had been considerably troubled by many ascetics, all of whom taught a different way, all of whom said that their way was the only way, all of whom said that any other way was wrong. The chief of the Kalamas asked Buddha how he could know which was right and which one was wrong. The Buddha advised Kalamas:

> Do not be led by report, or traditions, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: "this is our teacher". But, O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome, wrong, and bad then give them up….And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good then accept them and follow them…[2]

This statement shows that the Buddha gave freedom of thought to his followers to carefully consider and investigate before agreeing with any teaching.

The Buddha did not encourage people to change their old religion without careful consideration. As the example of a man named Upali who wanted to change his old religion, one day he approached the Buddha and told him that he would like to be one of his followers. The Buddha asked him the reason for changing his religion. The man replied, "*I heard that so many people are praising and appreciating the Buddha's teachings and his religious way of life. So I also decided to follow the Buddha*." Then the Buddha asked him, "*Have you ever heard my teachings? Do you know whether there is truth in my teachings? Do you know whether you can practice my way of life*." The man replied, "*Ven. Sir, this advice that you just gave me, is more than enough for me to understand the nature of your teaching*." Soon he became a follower of the Buddha. Again he asked, "*Is it permissible for me to continue giving alms to the priests of my former faith?*" The Buddha replied that there was no reason whatsoever for him to stop giving alms to any priests. The Buddha explained on many occasions that anyone could give alms to anybody in this world. Giving alms is a meritorious deed. This story is a good example for us to understand the sort of method the Buddha adopted to introduce his religion and to understand how the Buddha treated the followers of other religions.

In the year 256 BCE, the concept of "Buddhist tolerance" was highly accepted during Emperor Ashoka reign. As he mentioned;

[1] Maurice Walshe, Trans. **The Long Discourses of the Buddha** (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 68.
[2] Tipitaka, **Anguttaranikaya**.

> One should not honor only one's own religion and condemn the religions of others, but one should honor others' religion for this or that reason. In so doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honors his own religion and condemns other religions, does do indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking "I will glorify my own religion". But on the contray in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely.[3]

What Emperor Ashoka wanted to tell us is that some people have misunderstood that to honor one's own religion and condemn others' religion is the way to promote and glorify their own religions. He suggested that condemning others' religion is equal to condemning one's own religion; in the same way, honoring others' religion is equal to honoring one's own religion. This statement shows that Emperor Ashoka had implemented the Buddhist tolerance in his administration.

3. How to Apply Buddhist Tolerance for Peaceful Co-existence in Asian Nations

It can be said that tolerance is a common essence of all Asian religions and cultures. But the question is: How can we make it practical or apply it in our daily life? How can make it a necessary condition for spiritual development? So, in the following presentation, the author will try to share how to make tolerance practical based on Buddhist perspective.

Tolerance in Buddhist perspective can be divided into the following three aspects:

1. Brotherhood-Based Tolerance: In Buddhism, tolerance is not only a superficial thing at the level of recognizing, understanding, and compromising with other religions and cultures so that we can live together, but it is based on the belief that all beings, whether humans or non-humans; whether Buddhists or non-Buddhists, are our fellows who are facing the same problems in the long way of the cycle of rebirth. Buddhism teaches that in the cycle of rebirth, no all beings have never been our relatives in the past lives; they may have been our father, mother, brother or sister. So, from this mental attitude, true Buddhists try to avoid killing or harming all beings. Because killing or harming the others is equal to killing or harming their own relatives. This can be called the "Brotherhood-based tolerance" in Buddhism.

2. Universal Love-Based Tolerance: Believing that all beings are facing the common problems in the cycle of rebirth as mentioned above, Buddhists have tried to spread loving-kindness and compassionate mind to all beings in daily life, wishing them free from suffering and be happy. Especially in Thailand, after chanting and practicing meditation, Thai people are traditionally taught to spread loving-kindness and compassionate mind to all beings. Buddhists believe that spreading loving-kindness and compassionate mind is a part of merit-making and of spiritual development towards the Enlightenment. According to Buddhism, the ones, who have narrow-mindedness and no universal love to all beings, still have defilements that obstruct them not to attain the Enlightenment. So, it can be said that the tolerance based on the universal love is identical with inner transformation or spiritual development towards the Enlightenment in Buddhism.

[3] See in Walpola Rahula, **What the Buddha Taught** (Taiwan: the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2005), p. 4.

3. Spiritual Development-Based Tolerance: In addition, Buddhism teaches that the narrow-mindedness or non-tolerance is one of defilements in human mind that must be removed if they want to attain the Enlightenment. Buddhists hold that it is their religious duty to remove the defilement dealing with narrow-mindedness or non-tolerance from their minds. If not so, the final goal or Enlightenment can not be attained.

4. Conclusion

From the above presentation, it can be concluded that tolerance is a common essence of all Asian religions and cultures. The question is: how can we make it practical in our daily life and identical with our spiritual development towards the final goal of each religion. From Buddhist perspective, tolerance will be a superficial and temporary thing if it is superficially interpreted or explained in terms of mutual understanding, recognizing, and compromising among different religions and cultures. It will be a permanent thing if we can make it the way of our daily life and a necessary condition for spiritual development towards the final goal of each religion and culture.

Teaching Buddhism by Understanding the Phenomena of Nature: Integrating Dhamma Teaching Methodology into Environment Education Program - A New Approach to Comprehend Buddhist-Environmental Teaching Practice

Suryo W. Prawiroatmodjo

Background - Justification:

The contemporary formal education methodologies used in developed-European and other countries is known as the cross-subject curriculum, i.e.: an integrated education system in which all subjects taught at the same level of education, comprise similar topics. e.g.: IB (International Baccalaureate School System), Cambridge Schools, etc. In Indonesia, government policy tries to adapt these schemes by transforming some schools into the SBI and RSBI (Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional – International Standard Schools and International Standard Schools on Planning)

The integration system suggests that teachers of same level sit together and decide which particular topic or theme to become the main issue to be taught at least for the semester. Once the main topic was decided upon, other subject lessons will be chosen based on that theme. The students and teachers should then be taken to a particular site which would stimulate the topic. Experimentation, observation, and other planned activities should then be implemented. Teachers and facilitators should assist the learners to find the answers to all the questions prepared before, by themselves.

This is an effective and efficient strategy. With one single outing program, students could learn various lessons and topics observed from different point of views. The students will be motivated to learn more as they find facts on the field, reality in life. They would understand better the subjects' lessons they study, because they have experience it themselves.

The contemporary education method of lessons taught in schools, also in non-formal (public) education is based on experiential learning. As mentioned above, from the experience in the field, people will discover the heart of the matter - in nature's phenomena. Field experiences will have deep impacts on one's idea and transform them to better understanding. It will generate awareness, further if it touches the heart, mind and spirit it will have a good force to act accordingly, which will empower them with an immense force which if used properly, it will strive to a greater goal in their lives.

The present basic education put a focus on the future of the young students. The education provides them with "life skills" which in turn serves as good tools to face the challenges of life. The life skill education teaches them with not only vocational skills, but they can also be integrated with other scientific knowledge. The life skill education for some schools and public education will be based on the knowledge and understanding of nature and human made environment. This is important, because the basic principle is on the good management of natural resources.

All the above-mentioned systems have been implemented in East Java (by the author). It began in the mid-1980s and was developed from simple, basic field-education in nature-conservation. Along with the progress of both the development of the problems and from the strategies to overcome it - contemporary education methods reached the best role model for the present. The best role-model method was finally achieved after long observation, study and modification of problems, ways to overcome them and the results.

With in-the-field experience-based education, every method and strategy will goad people to face and see the reality of life and their subsequent problems, which could be explored both physically and or mentally/spiritually which eventually will lead them into self-discovery. As the old saying goes: seeing is believing, we can also add experiencing is understanding.

It is much easier and less burdensome to learn the Buddhist philosophical aspects, by experiencing it on the field. Particularly if one embarks upon if one embarks upon ecological explorations, one would immediately see the interlinked-ness, inter-dependency of every elements of the nature, both living and non living. Prior to personally involved in the exploration and study in nature, most people are not aware that humans need the existence and availability of other living beings and non-living matter. In brief, learning from nature will give us knowledge and wisdom towards life and nature. On the other hand, in schools and other education institutions, Buddhist education programs are taught mostly on a theoretical basis, either by oral (verbal) method. It is true that for specific reason, some lessons should be memorized; but, for the basic understanding and truth: it is easier to learn Buddhist principles from nature and social life.

Close to 30-years of experience in implementing and integrating Dhamma teaching into environment education in theory and practice have shown that it is much easier to understand Buddhist philosophy, ethics and moral conducts from interpreting and learning from natural phenomena and social conditions rather than looking for them elsewhere.

Proposed new approach (development of existing methods/implementations):

It was Buddha Himself who discovered the method of using the surrounding environment to understand life and all its meanings. It was the deep-observations on the Four Encounters (which were actual social condition during that time) that made Prince Siddhartha become aware of suffering and started searching for the meaning of life. The big questions raised by Him after the incidents, lead the Prince into Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

Basic Buddhist view on the nature and the environment:

Sabbe Satta bavantu sukhitata: May all beings be in happiness. This main phrase of the Buddhist's teachings shows the basic ethical conduct of Buddhists towards other beings and nature. Buddhists expect that other beings and creatures: big and small, visible and invisible should be allowed to have harmonious lives and be happy, individually.

One's view toward other living things are as clear as Buddhist teachings which states that life is not an isolated process commencing with birth and ending in death. Each single-lifespan is only one tiny part of a series of lives having no definite beginning in time and continuing on as long as the desire for existence stands intact. Rebirth can take place in various realms of human beings and animals, on higher level we will find heavenly worlds of greater happiness, beauty and power and on lower level we find infernal worlds of extreme sufferings. *Kamma* is the cause of rebirth. *Kamma* determines the world into which rebirth would take place, virtuous actions will bring rebirth into higher form, bad-evil actions rebirth into lower forms.

It is clear that in Buddhist's teaching, all forms of living beings are interrelated, particularly as they are believed to be the same individual of beings in different forms. Therefore, compassion for other beings and creatures is basic and important in Buddhist ethics and morals.

The bad *kamma* starts by ignorance and the absence of the knowledge of wisdom (*avijja – avidya).* This will lead into wrong actions, which in turns bring bad *kamma.* The ignorance of the cause of sufferings, and how to end it, is the main reason that sets the wheel of life [Karma] in motion or, in other words, it is the not-knowingness (ignorance) of things as they truly are, or as oneself - as one really is. This ignorance clouds right understanding. When ignorance is destroyed and turned into knowingness, all causality will be shattered.

Buddhist ethics in the *Vinaya Sutta* give guidelines on good actions through *sila*. Never bear bad thought, words and deeds are put in clear guidance under the light of the Noble Eight Fold Middle Paths.

The *adhamma* which should be avoided according to Buddhist ethics are *lobha, dosa* and *moha*. These are deeds that are associated with attachment, ill-will and delusion and it is important to understand these principles because they have big influence on humans' actions towards other creatures and nature. People should avoid these acts of attachment, not only to free them from the wheel of *kamma* which will cause them to be reborn but also to make them able to care, love and have compassion which will rewards them with good *kamma*. Avoiding the attachments acts certainly will lead us to better *kamma,* to end the cause and effects of suffering (*dukkha*), and to have better ethics and moral conducts.

Principles of the environment and socio ecology:

Basic principles of ecology and the environment involves the following elements: hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and chemicals which are components of natural food chains; and from their interactions: it would be easy to start to understand and accept basic Buddhism. The ecology views of life on earth depends on two fundamental processes: matter cycling and the one-way flow of high [quality] energy from the sun, which penetrates through matter and living things on or near the earth's surface, which in turn will be reflected into space as heat. The basic principles of ecology are about the interdependency of the organic/biotic factors with non-organic/abiotic matter. The organic elements comprises of: plants & animals (including humans); while the non-organic matter, includes:

- Soil/earth (including: stones, sand, mud and the various minerals)
- Water (fresh and salt water)
- Air (Oxygen, CO_2, Nitrogen and other gaseous-substances)
- Energy (sunlight, fire, electricity)

The interrelations of all these factors are in the form of cycles; some important cycles are:

- Water-cycle: water from water bodies (lake, river, sea), which turn into vapor, clouds, rain, then back into the rivers and springs.
- Oxygen-carbon cycle: oxygen absorbed by animals (and humans) exhaling carbon dioxide which is absorbed by plants exhaling oxygen
- nitrogen cycle: nitrogen (by process of sunlight) into plants & animals which after decomposition replenished nitrogen
- other cycles: phosphorous, sulfur, organic substances cycles; food chain producers – consumers pyramid and the subsequent decomposition

The interrelations of these elements are complex, and ideally should be in balance, so that all living organism could live together in perfect harmony. Should there be any imbalance or disturbance to whatever degree with whichever element, it will surely create problems: pollution, erosion (landslides, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and/or other geological disasters. A balanced harmonious nature would give fulfillment to human needs. Nature provides everything, enough for all human needs. With proper balance in nature, *the Eight Noble Middle Ways* – their implementation - would make it possible for humans to live in happiness and be integrated in harmony with nature.

Learning Buddhism concepts from Ecological phenomena (simplified version):

Reflection on water and the banyan trees

Understanding the physical matter – (simple) food cycle: producers (plants) – herbivores – carnivore 1 – carnivore 2 – decomposers – non-biotic elements – herbivores: would lead us into a discussion of where and how the *jiva* would also cycle. From this bio-physical view, it is clearly proven that all creatures – living things, will decompose and disintegrate into basic matter: the chemical forms of the non-biotic factors. It won't be too long before these non-biotic elements will be absorbed, either by the old reproductive plants, or a just-newly germinating-seedlings. The same elements now are incorporated inside the new living thing.

There should be a big question asked to pair the cycle of matter; that is what will happen to the *jiva*? From the mentioned above ecological explanation, it would not be difficult to understand *kamma*: the cycle of *jiva*, as *jiva* will always take different physical forms of life depending on the *kamma* the *jiva* obtained. Science (Einstein) has explained that matter – energy, is eternal, it will only change its form. Buddhism has the reasonable explanation about the *jiva*: where it will go and what will and can happen to it.

By a simple action such as visiting a spring with a banyan tree on its' edge, there are lots of things to reflect towards. It seems that water gushes from nowhere, yet it comes out from the ground. It follows the natural law of water cycle: from water bodies (lake, river, and sea), vapor, clouds, rain, and springs into river. It gives power to the life of the myriads creatures, to many living things including the banyan tree that stands tall, magnificently on the edge of the spring.

Upon the banyan tree, there are myriads of creatures, plants and animals, both visible and invisible, living their lives on the tree. Everything is interlinked and inter dependent to each other, as they also are with other non-biotic elements: oxygen – carbon dioxide cycle, nitrogen cycle and other minerals cycles too.

It is obvious that delusion has clouded our spiritual eye on these matters, as man is busily occupied with other things that he thinks are his main important needs. It is avijja *(avidya)* that leads human into ignorance, thinking that the spring and banyan tree are not part of human's life and *kamma*

For reasons based on *lobha,* man would carelessly cut the banyan tree and pollute the springs. They are totally ignorant on the great loss and sufferings it would later create for the community, caused by man's *lobha*. What we should really do is to reflect on the interlinked-ness and interrelation of the spring and the banyan tree and creatures and creatures living on it, physically and also spiritually.

Social problems related to ecological imbalance:

Basic simplified examples are: learning the conditions of a ruined forest, it's cause (*lobha*: excessive deforestation, greed of exploitation etc.) and the impacts: land slide, flood, desertification, hunger, famine, extinction of various species etc. creating *dukkha,* suffering of all creatures.

There should ideally be a harmonious balanced life between the human community and nature, i.e. the spring, the banyan tree and their whole natural surroundings. Caused by man's *lobha,* it could turn into disaster for the whole community. The cutting of the banyan tree and other trees not for local need will cause imbalance *to the forest*, water retention will decrease and could even entirely stop. Trees and food supplies for the villagers will also diminish. It will create poverty, sufferings, hunger and desertification.

Once that kind of thing is allowed to happen, others will follow suit to log illegally and took whatever they could find and want from the rest of the forest. They will leave nothing for their own future, let alone for other beings. Ignorance blinds people and leads them further to worse *kamma*. From supposedly small scale ignorance, it will go on and on to a larger scale and up to cause desertification. In the end, man will not be able to stop the climate change that will eventually lead into global warming, flood and longer dry seasons - as was shown by reports on TV and other media.

Environmental preservation and restoration based on Buddhist principles

Various environmental good practices are the implementation of *metta, karuna* and *mudita* which lead people to have better lives: increase of income from different alternatives ways such as using the principles of: reuse, reduce and recycle. It is also becomes a sustainable way of life, as it creates complete cycles of matters.

In the modern contemporary environmental education methodologies developed up until this date, there have been quite similar concerns over environmental disasters caused by human actions, such as: education of Agenda 21, Education for Sustainable Development, education of human welfare, concerns about animal welfare and others - all talk about ways to understand the causes, the impacts, ways to solve them up and how people should behave towards others and the environment. Yet they lack the spiritual side and basic principles: the rights of other creatures, which are the meanings of nature's phenomena.

Implementation and development of the innovation

Currently there are various contemporary environmental education programs and methods. Mostly were developed as result of the 1992 UNEP's Rio de Janeiro's Summit and other United Nations programs such AS MDGs of the UNDP, Agenda 21 of UNEP, and others: Education for Sustainable Development, Education for human's welfare. International and national communities also developed various education programs, such as: Education of Global Warning and Climate Change by the British Council Indonesia office, the Foot Prints created by international teachers network ICCE and others.

There are non-human based activities, such as the programs developed by WWF (World Wide Fund International), PETA the animals' advocacy group, and other various species based activities: orangutan, gorilla and other primates, birds lover groups, also forest defense groups. Most of them develop their own education programs, intended both for general public and formal education systems.

From the names and themes of the various systems mentioned above, we can see the concerns, aims and targets they wish to reach. All of them have created their education programs both for general public and school students. They developed creative and innovative ways, using various methods and media to promote and let people understand the basic ideas, to make them aware of the problems and accept to participate on the programs.

In general the aims and targets of these programs are to raise awareness on the challenges human will have to face in the (short and long) future caused by the complex problems the earth and the world suffer today. They let the audience to understand the problems and interlink with human life and welfare. The ultimate is to invite the audience to have an active participation towards the problems' solutions, however small it could be.

Each of these programs has their own characteristic and specific model. Agenda 21 educates people with a democratization style, i.e.: every one, every group of community, regardless who they are whether young or old, from whatever level of social background, education, profession, religion, location etc., will participate to plan their environment and life in the future. The ESD – Education

for Sustainable Development emphasizes on the availability of renewable natural resources and on how people should manage them wisely. It aims to have an everlasting prosperity with this model.

The others have their own approaches and different emphasis on the main concerns. The wildlife and animal protection movements seems to have the **only concern** on the welfare and the conservation of animals. Actually the ultimate target is human welfare, as without animals and their habitat humans cannot survive. Some of these movement might have strong liaisons and motivations with animal protection which have gone too far, as they have put the animals concern up too high above human level. Therefore it is not popular and easily accepted by the public.

Somehow, these new methodologies still miss something a most important point: the understanding of *kamma,* culminated into the principle that other beings have the same rights as humans, even though humans might have higher status. The lack of spiritual understanding concerning these matters makes these modern environmental education systems unable to reach the goals they have aimed for in the first place, supposedly because almost all of these contemporary environmental-education methods were initiated and spurred on by the anthropocentric human ego.

The integration of Buddhism and environmental teachings is an idealistic combination. The Buddhist middle way offers a balance of logic and factual reasons on environment equilibrium. It would not take the human or other living things side only, but aim for higher targets which encompass all components of the planet. Buddhist teachings understand well the balance, harmony and position of the various elements and aspects of nature, including humans.

The methodology and its process; The development of the idea.

According to Howard Gardner (1993) from the psychology pedagogical point of view there are many things of intelligence: verbal-lingual intelligence, musical-artistic intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence, kinesthetically intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, social-interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and natural intelligence. However, it is at the field practice where natural intelligence plays the leading part, the whole intelligences can be trained and integrated properly.

On education model strategies, Bank, Henderson and Laurel Eu (1981) wrote that there are five models: concept analysis, creative thinking, experiential learning, group inquiry and role playing models. These models are strategies used to reach the aims set on the learning process (Joni, 1980). The term 'teaching model" is defined by Joice, Weils & Showers (1992) as a plan or pattern which is developed for teaching person to person in a classroom or tutorial settings and to shape instructional materials – including books, tapes, films, computer mediated programs, and curricula (long term course of study)

The present international schools standards might be based on the above theories. The experiential learning model is combined with the natural intelligence, to become a practical procedure to guide them on the field. The combination seems perfect to explore other intelligences, and other strategies could be included further. This might be the logical reason that modern school system uses the experiential learning method, particularly when working on natural surroundings.

With this kind of education strategy, each person's main/major intelligence(s) will be challenged to produce maximum result, exposed optimally and maximal exploration can be done. The minor intelligences of the same individual will not be suppressed; they will still be possible to grow as a supplement skills for the person. The person's competence will come out at the peak it could be exploited to the utmost.

Compare to the above mentioned strategy, the present education teaching system mostly employs only parts of the whole scheme, which teaches each subject lesson individually and separately, without conjunction to a mutual target. At the end, the result is that students cannot analyze things integrally. They would see things separately. It becomes difficult for them to link topics about a forest with physics, chemistry and mathematics. For them, forest is a biology topic, and could only be linked to sociology.

In nature all the multiple intelligences could be simultaneously practiced, and from the experiential learning strategy it would be possible to use and explore other strategies to obtain the optimum result. It just needs a proper planning on the procedures of how these integrated strategies should be used, and that applied to the media and the equipments too.

The Buddhist teaching is based on philosophy, moral and ethics education principles. For many beginners and young people, these are quite abstract concepts, which are not easy to absorb and to understand; that makes it the more reason to consider that the appropriate model to implement the Buddhist education would be the experiential learning model based on the natural intelligence. It is from the nature and the daily social life, that Buddhist teaching could be explored to the full.

As the practical implementation of Buddhist values in the universal teaching is very important, so is tangible and real field actions. It might appear very insignificant, but practical actions imbued with spiritual meanings would be the right way to make Buddhist teaching easily understood, particularly for beginners and young people.

Programs and projects on environment restoration and rehabilitation will not only benefit for the nature, but also for humans and all other living things. Some activities will support the communities to develop the life quality. A good example is the project on water recycling. From a dirty low quality polluted water, with just a simple way of using water plants, rocks, stones and sand as filter, better quality water will be produced. This water is valuable; it can be used to water vegetables and also to keep some fish (such as eel, catfish and others). The harvests resulted from that action will certainly improve the people's life quality.

Such an example of treating polluted water with a scheme to improve life quality, can be analyzed from Buddhist point of view; on the ethics and moral actions of polluting and recycling the water, so too, our *jiva* could be filtered and cleaned; while the tangible actions of this project are certainly a good *kamma,*

There will be many more of such environmental restoration and rehabilitation programs which are fit and suitable for both community empowerment – development and factual forms of Buddhist teachings. In fact environmental concepts and actions could be interpreted as the realizations of Buddhist philosophy. Caring for the environment is equal as to care for others: humans and visible and invisible creatures. They are the direct implementation of *metta*, *karuna* and *mudhita*. All these environmental activities could be interpreted from Buddhist perception.

From the other angle of some Buddhist based activities, proper knowledge on the environment is essential. Without good knowledge it would not be good *kamma* that we gain, on the other side it brings bad *kamma* for all humans and creatures. According to Miller (1988, p. 592) integration of environmental and Buddhist knowledge is among the best answer to the today's world environment problems. While many other philosophies are anthropocentric – human centered, which believes that people are in charge of – not merely a part – of nature. These attitudes are dominant all over the world, even in the countries with Eastern beliefs and ethics as well.

If this innovative idea of the Integrated Buddhist and Environment Education (IBEE) is accepted and then developed further, it could become a big contribution both to the world and Buddhism. Nevertheless a proper inspection, try outs and analyzes are much needed. Some basic training of the pioneers should be organized after a proper plan is laid down.

Experts on this matter should gather and make more details on the possible curricula, strategies¸ modules, the media and other needs related to specific target groups. It would be interesting and necessary to create a kind of IBEE Club. The members are those who have the interest, knowledge and skills on the topics mentioned above. It is better not to limit the membership to experts only, lay people could also give their contribution on the analyzes whether this method were appropriate and suitable or not. They can give objective evaluation on all the aspects, based on local wisdom and tradition.

The process / steps of a good IBEE action:

There should be good preparations on the topic, materials, target group(s), media, equipments, location/site, other supporting factors; accommodation, transport. The first thing to do is to create a good plan. The plan will consist of the factors mentioned before. The creator (planner) should have proper knowledge on the topic, both the environment and the Buddhist principles that would be discussed.

The main facilitator would prepare the Terms of References; there are details on the activities from time to time, the aim(s) of this particular activity – the target(s) it aims to, media, facilities and equipment needed; the site and name of the person in charge: resource person, tutor(s), assistants and the role they act upon.

As this method is an outdoor activity based, the atmosphere should be in a much relaxing condition. It might be scientific, but it could be fun too. Some care should be noted: particularly for youngsters about the possible accident that could happen on the field. The site / location preparations certainly are among the important things to be set, it should be done several times, and evaluated whether it is appropriate or not.

On the field there are three major activities as the main basic activities; which are: observation, comparison and (simple) experiments / actions. With observation, whether it is on a tangible in hand object, or a view or a social condition, member of the target groups should observe the object as detailed as possible. It would be easier if the facilitator / tutor create good guidelines questionnaires. On the active learning process, the teacher as a good facilitator should be able to stimulate the student to ask and find the answer by himself after doing good observation.

During this phase the analogy on the topics could be raised; that is, on the Buddhist philosophy and principles. On the same action, questions on the factual physical situation / condition and on the philosophy could be raised together, this is critical but the appropriate way to learn deeper on the meanings of the Teachings.

The next form of field activity is comparison.As the meaning of the word denote itself, it is actually a combined observation of a couple or more objects. This activity would reveal more factual facts or conditions of the objects. It is easier for many people to understand the circumstances or phenomena after comparing objects; besides, this activity will give the observer a wider horizon.

The third form of activity is (simple) experiments. Some people will easier understand matters if they have done or experiencing themselves; even though experiments might be unpleasant. They will never forget the lessons after experiencing this special activity. These experiments could be in positive ways too; such as re-planting plants, recycling wastes and many others. The difference of the IBEE and other common environment education programs is on IBEE'S specific point of view which conforms to Buddhist principles and teachings. The point of view and how to see things would be different from Buddhist way.

Close to the end of the program, future action plans should be set to ensure the continuity of the whole program. It is an indirect way to evaluate whether the program's targets are achieved. There should be also a direct evaluation to know whether there are things that are not appropriate or not suited to the participants. It is useful for the organizers to improve the programs quality.

Further actions plan

A proper and well-planned training for such future *Dhamma* trainers is much needed. There should be a good systematical training done by experts of the fore mentioned knowledge on the field, to develop a good program on IBEE (Integration of Buddhist and Environmental Education) methodology and the module. The tryout of the new method should be carried out formally in so far the method has been developed on experiential basis with various groups only.

Sessions to share experiences on this (new) approach among *Dhamma Duttas* and others would increase its quality. There should be a kind of IBEE (Integration of Buddhist and Environment Education) club. It is much expected from IABU to follow up with a Workshop on Implementation of Integrating Methodology of *Dhamma* Teaching with Environmental Education.

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American Habits and Fresh Baked Bread

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It's a fantastic experiment that we're all engaged in,
bringing the dharma to the West.
--Jack Kornfield

American Dharma

Buddhism is a traveling tradition. Over its 2500 years, it has migrated throughout Asia, planting seeds, putting down roots, and establishing culturally distinct versions of itself. Today, in 2012, one of the most vast and complex Buddhist landscapes can be found in the United States. Since the 19th century, the discourses of Buddhadharma have circulated in select circles, but over the past 40 years, Buddhism has firmly taken root as large, thriving sanghas have established themselves and made their presence felt in American society. Between the so-called heritage Buddhist communities and convert communities, there are now several million Americans who call themselves Buddhist. For those of us who have been actively engaged in establishing and sustaining an American sangha, it is easy to wonder: what will American Buddhism look like in the future? What is it that we're giving birth to? Is there such as thing as an American Buddhist tradition emerging in the world and are there any clues in our midst about the nature of a future American Buddhism?

These are questions that have intrigued practitioners and scholars of Western Buddhism for decades. In his book *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture*, Stephen Batchelor describes attending the 1992 Congress of the European Buddhist Union. Amidst the intermingling of old and new forms, one of the more memorable speeches (for Batchelor) was given by the Tibetan Nyingma master Sogyal Rinpoche, who "sees the strength of Buddhism lying in its diversity and believes there is no hurry to create a Western form. For if we practice sincerely, the 'blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas' will lead us to a synthesis of the traditions all in good time" (373).

While this view might be perplexing and/or enticing to different audiences, the development of Buddhadharma in the West, and particularly in the United States, has kept practitioners guessing and assessing. In 2001, the online companion to the American Public Broadcasting System's television program *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly* asked several prominent scholars of religion to comment on the status of Buddhism in America in the new millennium. As each scholar weighed in on issues such as disparities between immigrant and convert Buddhist communities, the (possibly erroneous) view of Buddhism by many Americans as a secular self-help movement, and the shifts in practices and priorities that most Buddhist sanghas experience between the first and second generations of their establishment, a question seemed to hover on the peripheries of these statements. What would American Buddhism look like in the future? This tradition, or more accurately, this set of traditions, is still very much in the process of fully emerging on the American landscape. But it has announced

itself clearly and firmly enough that there is no doubt that there will be an American Buddhism in the 22nd century. And what will it look like? Donald K. Swearer of Swarthmore College offered one response: "The diversity of Buddhist expressions in America in particular, and the West more generally, is a unique chapter in the history of Buddhism. Buddhist sectarianism and its development in different cultural traditions are nothing new, so in a sense, we're witnessing a new version of an old story. How this diversity will sort itself out in the coming decades remains to be seen" ("The Direction of Buddhism in America Today").

Diversity and synthesis. Heritage and convert communities. The dharma as doctrine and the dharma as embodied wisdom. These are some of the contrasting elements up for grabs in the great American Buddhist experiment. And what of the American component in this equation? How will the dharma take root in the last remaining superpower? Will the dharma be co-opted as it is interpellated into American hegemony? Is it possible that American culture will be interpellated into the views of interdependence, emptiness, and Buddha Nature?

This paper will explore the current landscape of American Buddhadharma as it seeks out clues about its future. In particular, I ask how the emerging traditions of American Buddhisms might act as powerful antidotes to the entrenched American habits of consumerism and individualism. If traditional Buddhism is ready for a challenge, the United States is ready to offer it. Ours is arguably the most distracted, materialist, and pervasively aggressive culture in the history of the world. We are numb to horrors and sensitive to our own complaints. To aid in my exploration, I look at the work of Robert Bellah and fellow researchers on late-20th century individualism and religion as well as theories on the evolution of religion to explore this landscape of American dharma. Using this theoretical work as a lens through which to examine American religious praxis, I argue that the Buddhadharma practiced in the United States is both true to its Asian roots and at the same time offers a distinctly Western register. An oft-cited analogy for dharma shared by numerous American sanghas is that dharma should be like fresh-baked bread rather than a story about bread. The dharma or dharmas that emerge from my research are direct, breathing, alive; ultimately, I argue, the only versions of Buddhism that could possibly make an impact in 21st century America must bear the aroma of fresh-baked bread.

The Habits of American Individualism

The relationship between American individualism and religious praxis was the subject of one of the most widely-discussed works of late-20th century scholarship on religion. In *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and colleagues examine the roots of American individualism and look to the early generations of American society to try to find its source. Drawing upon the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, they chart the potential for individualism embedded in the earliest generations:

> Tocqueville described the mores—which he on occasion called the "habits of the heart"—of the American people and showed how they helped to form American character. He singled out family life, our religious traditions, and our participation in local politics as helping to create the kind of person who could sustain a connection to a wider political community and thus ultimately support the maintenance of free institutions. He also warned that some aspects of our character—what he was one of the first to call "individualism"—might eventually isolate Americans one from another and thereby undermine the conditions of freedom (xlii).

These habits, or practices of American individualism, seem predicated on a slightly mistaken understanding of good citizenship. As the authors write, "We believe that much of the thinking about the self of educated Americans, thinking that has become almost hegemonic in our universities and much of the middle class, is based on inadequate social science, impoverished philosophy, and vacuous theology" (84). As problematic as these habits of radical individualism are, they are now and have been for many generations entrenched in the American mythos.

As the researchers look at individual and collective beliefs and practices, they wonder aloud how the dangerous elements of individualism could be turned around, how, in other words, a more collectively focused America—which they believe was present in America's past—might be reclaimed. They acknowledge that "a return to traditional forms would be to return to intolerable discrimination and oppression. The question, then, is whether the older civic and biblical traditions have the capacity to reformulate themselves while simultaneously remaining faithful to their own deepest insights" (144).

Looking back to 1985, when the book was first published—albeit with the glorious hindsight of an additional generation—we might note that the authors overlooked something important. In their idealized longing for a return to a Christian American past that could regain communitarian roots while avoiding societal structures such as slavery or sectarian divisiveness, the authors were not looking at new traditions in their midst. By 1985, American Buddhadharma had already established a flourishing array of communities, practices, and traditions. And, importantly for their work on the dangers of individualism, all lineages of Buddhism are organized around a view and set of practices designed to dissolve a solid sense of self and to cultivate the power of working in community.

Ten years after the publication of *Habits of the Heart*, the authors revisited their work and took stock of America in the mid-1990s. They concluded, sadly, that the concerns raised in 1985 were even more pronounced. "American individualism," they write in an Introduction to the updated edition in 1996, "demands personal effort and stimulates great energy to achieve, yet it provides little encouragement for nurturance, taking a sink-or-swim approach to moral development as well as to economic success. It admires toughness and strength and fears softness and weakness" (viii).

If mainstream middle class America was even more prone to individualism and selfishness in 1996, what was the state of American Buddhadharma by that time? It had come fully of age. Numerous sanghas that were still in early developmental stages in the 1980s were now healthy and large. Several of the major teachers, who had introduced Buddhism in America in the 1970s, had died and passed on a mantle of teaching duties and leadership to senior students, many of them American. A few of the largest sanghas had weathered scandals and trauma that initially reduced their membership and then recovered stronger and more clearly defined than ever. If American practitioners of mainstream religions were struggling with crises of the heart in the 1980s and 90s, American Buddhists were spending that time in community, building retreat centers, stupas, prison dharma outreach programs, and other engaged Buddhist programs.

There is quite possibly a direct connection between the concerns that drove *Habits of the Heart* and the movement toward American Buddhism. For many Americans, the era of the 1980s into the 1990s was a moral vacuum. There were few galvanizing movements or issues in this post-everything era (post-feminist, post-hippy, post-cold war, post-irony, post-modern). It was the era of the yuppy, the Wall Street insider, and the dot-com millionaire. American idealists needed

a new direction and Buddhist teachers showed up to offer it. And unlike the Beat generation of the 1960s, in which Buddhism was often perceived as a cultural style to try on or an exotic escape from Americana, American Buddhism in the 80s and 90s brought the dharma right smack into the middle of our own back yards and living rooms. The message became: stay home, sit, make friends with yourself, clean up your own mess. This was not our freaky uncles' dharma. This was down-home, get to work, smell your own sweat dharma.

But what was and is the nature of that dharma? What emerged during this time and how did it make such an impact on Americans? One approach to this question is to look at a model on the evolution of religion. In his 1999 essay "The Widening Gyre: Religion, Culture and Evolution," evolutionary psychologist Merlin Donald offers his theoretical model of the emergence of religion amongst the earliest human societies. In order for religion to emerge, he argues, two developments had to happen. First, humans needed to practice mimesis, or the act of "observing a behavior and mimicking it, acting it out." Second, humans needed to develop speech; thus they "incorporated mimetic ritual under a more powerful system of narrative thinking, which produced 'mythic' cultures." In his 2008 essay "The R Word," Robert Bellah extends Donald's theory by arguing that an additional developmental stage allowed religion to deepen into a more sophisticated, flourishing state. This stage, "the emergence of theoretic culture, the capacity for objective critical reasoning," is relatively recent in human evolution (the first evidence, says Bellah, is the first millennium B.C.E.).

Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny

This three-part model of the evolution of religion offers intriguing tendrils of possibility about the nature of religion and religious practice in human experience. It also offers a surprising model for the experience of contemporary dharma. I argue that in the case of American Buddhadharma, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny—to borrow from the evolutionary theory that each individual's development follows the same sequence of stages first established in ancestral development.

Americans come to Buddhism seeking a way out of the nightmare of samsara. But what do they experience at their local dharma center? Intuitive thinking would say that they would receive a series of discourses on the Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, karma, or some other useful doctrine. But what most Americans receive, first and foremost, is a mimesis-level transmission that allows them to connect directly with Buddhadharma. Indeed, in many sanghas, new practitioners are led through a process by which they learn mimetically to sit, walk and (sometimes) chant.

Merlin Donald writes, "Two of the most distinctive mimetic abilities are re-enacting what we observe, and engaging in role-playing games. Mimesis is a whole-body skill, unique to human beings, whereby we can use our entire bodies as expressive devices" (2). The actions of entering the sacred space of a shrine room, bowing, and taking a meditation posture are simultaneously completely natural human functions and powerful dharma transmissions. For Americans, to do these things in company with fellow practitioners is a revolutionary act that begins the process of rewiring the mechanics of individualism.

Even the very language of meditation instruction is tailored to the mimetic moment. Just enough information is provided. The important thing is the act itself. Modification can come later.

At the 1997 Buddhism in America conference, Japanese Zen teacher Issho Fujita described the essence of basic or initial zazen instruction: “If I tried to give a detailed instruction, it would make many, many pages because if I check out all the parts of the body, I have to say something. Eyes, facial expression, shoulder, and so on. It’s kind of endless. But I can make it shorter, one sentence. ‘Sit upright’” (124-25). Every American sangha has its version of “Sit upright.”

The second stage of this model—language—happens at some point subsequent to the transmission through mimesis. This is when a new practitioner learns the discourse of his or her community. This includes traditional Buddhist doctrine as well as the narratives and myths of the sangha’s particular lineage. For the past thirty years, the publishing industry of Western dharma has produced thousands of books aimed directly at the Western student. Books and talks address the speed, aggression, materialism, and selfishness of modern Western life. Students take classes and memorize lists of traditional Buddhist terms. They also learn to speak in very personal and colloquial terms about dharma.

Interestingly, many Americans try and fail to become Buddhists by jumping straight into the literature. They buy and read books and hope that somehow, magically, they will transform from reader to meditator. Inevitably, they recognize that they need to practice and thus seek out live meditation instruction. In my own experience as a meditation teacher, I have met many dozens of such people, who spend months or years reading about the dharma before they surrender to the realization that they need to practice meditation in order to truly apprehend the dharma.

The final phase, the era of theorizing, can take the form of complex integration, critique and complaint or, these days, a re-framing of dharma through a scientific lens. The process of integration allows for students to consider how dharma fits into the larger schema of their lives. This includes how we explain or translate our Buddhist identities to family and friends and how we organize our physical lives around Buddhist principles. The stage of complaint and interrogating difficulties possibly does not happen to every American Buddhist, but it has happened to every American Buddhist that I have ever known. This stage is the sign that the dharma honeymoon is over and often heralds the beginning of a richer, more mature dharma life. It is potentially an extraordinarily helpful process of looking at habitual patterns and escape hatches. It often takes the practitioner through a portal to the next developmental stage on one’s path. It can also be a catalyst for change—out of Buddhism, to another sangha, or another Buddhist teacher.

The relatively recent focus on finding scientific explanations for meditation, while seeming to have little to do with an individual dharma path, has a great deal to do with an individual’s perception of dharma. This re-framing of Buddhism could actually be viewed as staying quite true to Buddhism’s roots as a tradition of investigation. It is yet another way for Westerners to make sense of meditation. Korean Zen teacher Mu Soeng compared Buddhism with quantum physics: “My hope is to present both quantum physics and Buddhism as two self-investigations through which each one of us has a certain perspective and where you can continue your own investigation into the nature of reality” (24).

As an American practitioner cycles through these three developmental phases, he or she always comes back to the primacy of mimesis. The power of the direct hit of dharma that we receive in our initial transmission haunts us on our path, and the transition into language and then theory are transitions into more sophisticated ways of making sense of mimesis, but always in the context of experiencing the raw immediacy of mimesis over and over again.

To understand how mimesis works within different sanghas, I examine three of the most prominent Buddhist communities in the United States, representing Theravadan, Mahayana, and Vajrayana roots—the Insight Meditation Society, Thich Nhat Hanh's lay students, and the Shambhala community—and observe specifically how new practitioners are introduced to the dharma and how they progress into a Buddhist identity. I also look at the distinct ways that each community utilizes non-verbal signs to identify their sangha and initiate mimesis-stage dharma transmission.

Insight Meditation Society

The Insight Meditation Society is the largest American organization based in the Theravadan Buddhist tradition. It is also likely the most internally diverse sangha in the United States; it does not hold one direct Theravadan lineage and its teachers have studied in many countries under many practice protocols. According to Jack Kornfield, one of the Society's founders, its diversity holds its strength:

> The Buddha is often described as the master of many skillful means. Gradual and sudden, outer and inner, form and emptiness were all aspects of his teaching. A wise teacher, and a wise center, needs to offer a whole range of skillful practices, because people come along at different stages of their inner development, with different temperaments, and with different sets of problems. If we limit ourselves to one technique, it will only serve certain people and it won't be helpful to others (36).

While this diversity might not seem to adhere to true mimesis-level transmission, I would argue that in a strange way, it does. Visiting an IMS retreat center or group is an encounter with a very gentle species of confidence. The senior teachers have been steeped in years of practice with Theravadan masters such as Mahasi Sayadaw, Ajahn Chah, Buddhadasa, and U Ba Khin, and that practice shines through. The teachers of IMS turn their years of meditation and study towards the facilitation of practice for new meditators.

The meditation instruction given by a teacher such as Joseph Goldstein privileges simplicity and softness. He gently guides the practitioner through posture and object of meditation grounded in an unobstructed present moment. "Stay in the simplicity of hearing, not naming the sound or trying to figure out what's making it. Simply hearing."

In the midst of such gentleness, an IMS retreat is known for the discipline that all cultivate. No talking for ten days. Periods of increased exertion on concentration. Hours of practice each day. And one special feature that has been adopted by other sanghas because it so effectively brings meditators into their bodies: the guided body scan. Starting at the head and slowly moving one's awareness down, inch by inch, to the feet, the body scan revolutionized Western dharma. By the 1990s, most convert sanghas had adopted some version of it.

Community of Mindful Living

The Community of Mindful Living is the lay practitioner branch of Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh's sangha. It and the Unified Buddhist Church—the monastic branch of the sangha—hold several mimesis-level characteristics widely familiar to many American Buddhists.

The first is softness. There is an overarching sense of softness that comes through in the students of Thich Nhat Hanh. There is softness in their speech, in their movements, and in their energy. At a weekly sangha gathering in Boulder, Colorado, people are welcomed with a soft hello and invited to help set up the space in soft tones. Group leader Brian Kimmel reports that at retreats, the sangha will stop someone and invite them to slow down their walk or their speech. When asked about the view towards softness, Kimmel speculates that it might partially come as a way of mimicking the teacher, who speaks and moves in a slow, deliberate manner. But as with other mimesis-level markers, the softness acts as a dharma transmission. It is part of the powerful training that this community engages in to stop habitual patterns.

A new practitioner might begin by performing the softness in an awkward verbal ballet, a trying on of a new tone of voice. But she is also connecting with the power of cutting her habitual way of speaking. Over time, as she continues to sit and settle her mind, she will likely let go of the imitation-level softness as she cultivates a more intimate embodiment of the speech of her community.

Softness meets precision in the mindfulness practice of shamatha, which is translated by Thich Nhat Hanh as "stopping." In shamatha, practitioners are stopping their habitual patterns; they are stopping the speed that gives rise to aggression. While the idea of stopping is quite precise, the initial instruction for shamatha is surprisingly fluid and open ended. New meditators are asked to "find the posture that works for your body." Eyes can be open or closed, as the meditator chooses. The idea, according to the instruction, is to find a way to settle, to connect with one's body and breathing and stay there. Later, reports Kimmel, further modification and adjustment is given to one's instruction on posture. But at the initial level, the soft approach leads.

Brian Kimmel describes the energy of a sangha together as like "a flock." The group dynamic takes on a life and energy of its own, as it moves together in walking meditation, or chants and sings together. Kimmel says that during a retreat, the group is everything; even in the midst of one's very personal dharma work, this work is done in the context of the flock. That sense of the flock is available to the new member of the group. It is felt at the beginning of a session, when a leader begins an opening chant and then the group joins him. It is felt in the practice of the stopping gong or mindfulness bell. A gong is sounded from time to time and everyone stops what he or she is doing to settle into the present moment. As with other practice, this is simultaneously intensely private and personal and shared with the collective.

For dharma-oriented Americans who have not experienced Thich Nhat Hanh live as a teacher or visited one of his practice groups, probably the most familiar marker of his teaching and sangha is his calligraphy. After several decades teaching in the west, Thich Nhat Hanh is easily seen through his calligraphy, which is an immediate form of dharma transmission. The calligraphy is simple and straightforward. The style is consistent and idiosyncratic, always recognizable as one of his. It consists of either single words or phrases conveying a dharmic message, usually in the form

of instruction or suggestion. The simplicity of the words mirrors the simplicity of the brushwork. Some examples of popular calligraphies are “breathe” and “smile.” Some convey the pith version of a more complex dharma teaching, such as “Peace is every step,” which communicates that our relationship with peace can be cultivated in our practice, one step after another, that our practice off the cushion can be as powerful as practice on the cushion. For those who have seen him teach, seeing the calligraphy can bring us instantly back to our experience of the teacher. For those who have not seen him teach, the calligraphy can act as a kind of surrogate teacher. Even as a print, it holds the power of a dharma transmission.

Shambhala

The mimesis-level transmission begins as soon as one steps into the building. When a new meditator enters any Shambhala Center, whether that center is located in Paris, New York, or London, there are certain features that unmistakably communicate the visual culture—the awake space—of the Shambhala community. This is particularly true when one enters the shrine room. Every Shambhala shrine room contains certain items and elements that have been designed and positioned to offer a gateway to wakefulness to anyone who enters. At the heart of the room sits the shrine, which features the bold traditional Tibetan colors of red and gold. Encased above or near the shrine are the traditional complete sutras of Shakyamuni Buddha, wrapped in their multi-colored cloths. In addition, every shrine has a rupa (statue), usually of one of the Tibetan versions of a Buddha, such as Vajradhara, a crystal ball, and other implements of Tibetan Buddhist practice. Above the shrine hangs a thangka and photographs of the teachers Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche (the founder of the Shambhala community) and his son (and current leader of the community) Sakyong Mipham, Rinpoche.

The Shambhala Center in Boulder, Colorado was the first city center established in the Shambhala mandala. It occupies a large, historical building in downtown Boulder and is one of the largest and most impressive centers. Nonetheless, stylistically, it is representative of the Shambhala aesthetic, which was informed by the Dharma Arts taught by Chögyam Trungpa. As a visitor climbs the stairs from the ground floor to the second floor, a window ledge on the stairwell landing offers a mental pause. The ledge has been transformed into a version of a Japanese tokonoma, space in which sacred art has been placed to both complete and open up an environment to the sacred. This ledge always features an ikebana arrangement. Every week a new arrangement is created, using local, in-season flowers and branches. The arrangement can have the effect of stopping the mind of anyone climbing the stairs to the upper meditation rooms.

Ikebana arrangements are found at strategic locations throughout the center. When the building is fully in use, with multiple programs throughout, there are usually between five and seven elaborate arrangements on the three main floors. During a very special program, for example during the celebration of Tibetan New Year, a large installation might mark the entryway to the main shrine room, which occupies the top floor of the building.

The building operates with a traditional Tibetan Mandala Principle, which is a three-dimensional representation of enlightened mind. First-time visitors often feel a pull inward and upward toward the third-floor shrine room. Each floor has been painted with colors designed to enhance their purpose and decorated with calligraphies and photographs intended to arrest discursive

mind and open the heart. The employees and senior teachers of the center also contribute to the Mandala Principle by conveying the warmth and confidence characteristic of Shambhala's emphasis on enlightened society.

As with the previous sanghas, meditation instruction in the Shambhala community prioritizes simple, clear guidance towards relaxing the body and settling the mind. The initial instruction is somewhat more complex than the other two, but it is still straightforward and to the point. Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche said that people experience Buddha Nature the first time they sit. By the time a new meditator has made it upstairs in the Boulder Shambhala Center, he or she has already received several hits of mimesis-level transmission.

Common Ground and Hybrid American Dharma

Although each of the three sanghas described above hold distinct views quite divergent from one another, they each prioritize and privilege the practice of sitting meditation. A new meditator is given initiation into the community by being given meditation instruction, which is an important gateway to each sangha's path. As Brian Kimmel noted and as is true in all three sanghas, practitioners over time will receive increasingly in-depth and nuanced modifications to the instruction of mindfulness practice. But in the very early stages, just sitting, a "just do it" approach allows the new meditator a first taste of his or her Buddha Nature. The simplicity of stepping out of the habitual speediness of everyday life, along with other mimesis-level markers of the sangha, offer a powerful transmission into openness and non-conceptuality.

Indeed, the non-conceptual possibly has greater presence without the discursive overlay of dense doctrine, rules, or instructions. There is less mental clutter to hold onto and manipulate. In the midst of such openness, the role of sangha, one of the most powerful conduits to the collective, can resonate for new practitioners. This might happen in the form of a conversation during a tea break, or gentle posture correction during sitting, or question and answer after a talk. It happens in myriad ways the way it has happened for 2500 years, as sangha has shared and born witness to each other's aspirations, challenges, breakdowns, and breakthroughs. It is in these moments that interconnectedness becomes real.

One element of interconnectedness that marks one of the unique registers of American dharma is the hybrid influences across sanghas. Everybody borrows best practices from one another. Each of the three sanghas that I examined uses practices from the other two traditions. All use the guided body scan introduced by the Theravadan communities. All use the mindfulness bell innovated by Thich Nhat Hanh. And all teach the traditional Tibetan compassion practice of tonglen.

Hybridity is further found amongst the teachers of the three sanghas. All three sanghas feature senior teachers that have trained outside their primary tradition. This sharing and cross-pollination reflects the dramatic access that Americans have to dharma teachers and teachings. Anyone with a computer can spend hours every day listening to talks and meditation instruction from the some of the most powerful Buddhist teachers living today. Moreover, individuals who can get to a major city have a chance to see many of today's great teachers live. These common features collectively mark an important shift in how Buddhism is received and experienced by new practitioners today as

compared with 50 years ago. It is an embarrassment of riches which has given rise to a generation of Americans who have seen more dharma talks, and met more meditation masters, than arguably any other culture at any other time in history. But does that mean that America is more enlightened?

The Shoppers, The Swappers, The Stoppers

What has been the impact of so much dharma circulating throughout the United States? I believe that this era, this century, will have a profound and lasting impact on the future, but we are still in the process of determining the nature of that future. We have the potential to become proof that the dharma can dismantle the powerful forces of American individualism and materialism. The future of American dharma will undoubtedly be based on our ability to shepherd new meditators into mimesis-level transmission, into a steady practice, and through that tenuous stage of theorizing and complaint.

Based on my observation as a meditation instructor and dharma teacher in the Shambhala community for the past ten years, I see three developmental stages that dharma practitioners go through as they move along their path. I call these stages Shopping, Swapping and Stopping. These categories need not be chronological, and they are often recursive. An individual might find herself in the shopping stage for several years, then pass over swapping and go to stopping, and then find herself back at shopping.

The Shoppers

The shoppers are curious about or interested in Buddhism but they are not interested in committing to anything. In some cases, they go to lots of talks given by name-brand teachers and do a lot of introductory-level programs. They are dharma window shoppers. Even if they repeatedly hear teachers talk about the importance of committing to one path and going as deeply as they can on that path, the shoppers are easily seduced or distracted. In some cases, they see themselves as still looking for that one best path or "their" teacher and they do not want to commit to something before they are sure. In other cases, they are serial monogamists who have tried to commit to different sanghas over the years, and thus have several past relationships of months or years-long connection before they became disenchanted, bored, or otherwise disengaged. One of the most common elements with shoppers is that the actual practice of meditation is challenging to sustain. They like the idea of meditation and often recognize the value of practice, but they are not able to establish a regular practice.

The Swappers

The swappers are people who do commit to a sangha for a period of time and then switch to a different sangha. Some swappers switch once and then settle into their new sangha. Some swappers switch several times. Unlike the shoppers, swappers do commit. Sometimes they are with their first sangha for many years before the switch; in other cases, their first sangha relationship is

much shorter. Likewise, there is variety in how they feel about their first sangha. They might feel that it was a worthy sangha and their personal dharma needs moved into a new direction. Conversely, they might leave a sangha with serious doubts about its credibility and even invest much time in denigrating the previous sangha.

The Stoppers

The stoppers are those individuals who acknowledge that, even when they might still want to shop or swap, they have made a lifelong commitment to a serious dharma path. They have stopped shopping for a shinier version of dharma, they have stopped kidding themselves that they can negotiate a way to use dharma to feed samsara, and they have committed to working on stopping their habitual patterns. The stopping stage is informed by true renunciation. At this stage, there is a maturity about the difficulty and inevitable disappointments on such a serious path. The novelty and romance have worn off and the practitioner is left with his mind and his practice. It is a lonely moment but also terribly exciting and opens up a world of fellow lonely, serious practitioners. The deepest significance of sangha comes through at the stopping stage.

As noted in the discussion on hybridity above, many practitioners with a committed, mature practice do still choose to either leave one sangha and join another or to add a second sangha affiliation to their path. Within the Shambhala community, at least two of the senior teachers, known as acharyas, have current relationships with Zen teachers. Such hybrid affiliation is not necessarily problematic, nor does it indicate that American Buddhists have no understanding or appreciation for lineage or the different views between the various yanas.

In some respects, the hybridity of American Buddhadharma is deeply informed by the tradition of American individualism. It is our individualism that leads us to dharma and meditation, our sense that a solitary journey towards happiness is possible. Americans feel free, authorized, and entitled to join and quit any sangha at will. Nonetheless, something happens along that path from shopping to stopping. A true dharma path requires an intimate relationship with sangha. Eventually, all progression on that path happens because of sangha, in the company of sangha, and witnessed by sangha.

What is interesting about the phenomenon of hybridity is that we are forced to let go of even the sectarian tendency towards pride of sangha when we have such in-depth contacts with other Buddhist groups. Even if I never shop around or contemplate a swap, chances are good that I have dharma brothers and sisters who have been or currently are connected with another sangha, which might even be in another yana. This is tremendously helpful in avoiding a sense of superiority. During his lifetime, Chögyam Trungpa worked with teachers from across the spectrum of Buddhism. His students sometimes came to him from other sanghas and some of his students went to other sanghas. He is credited with insisting that Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield become dharma teachers. He developed a plan with Suzuki Roshi to start a retreat center to serve both of their sanghas. Unfortunately, this plan did not have time to come to fruition before Suzuki Roshi died of cancer. Still, years after his death, Suzuki Roshi's photo hung over many Shambhala Center shrines. The senior students of these two teachers will always feel a special connection between their two sanghas. Hybridity invites the dissolving of sectarian boundaries. It is one of the most potent lessons in Buddhadharma and one of the strongest in dismantling individualism.

Final Reflections

It would be easy to assume that only the Stoppers have truly benefitted from Buddhadharma, that the Shoppers and the Swappers are just more American consumers doing what Americans do best: appropriating selfishly. But all traditions of Buddhism posit that seeds get planted and ripen at unpredictable times. It is impossible for me to say that the upper middle class Boulder housewife who has roamed the storefront of Buddhism for seven years, looking for the candy fix that will make her feel lovable, pretty, and popular won't wake up tomorrow with a taste of renunciation in her mouth. The powerful influence of mimesis plants dharmic seeds in thousands of mindstreams every day in America. Some of these seeds will sprout in this lifetime. Perhaps more in the next.

In 1997, Peter Matthiessen wrote that, for American Buddhists, "the Dharma is being left in our hands now. I think we are going to make a shift toward a less hierarchical practice with less finery. This has always been true, that any reformation movement simplifies things again to get back toward what the original teaching was. The Japanese teachers, to their great credit, wanted us to do that. They always encouraged us to form our own Zen, to not be so dependent on them" (397). As American Buddhism continues to mature, American teachers will undoubtedly make new marks and create new traditions specific to the new needs. It is a terrifying and exhilarating prospect.

Still, it is comforting to be reminded that, as Merlin Donald writes, "Our spirituality still rests firmly on a mimetic core, and this remains emotionally the most satisfying aspect of religion" (4). Seeing that American Buddhadharma is so steeped in practices of mimesis, seeing strong sanghas forging their own unique culture and training the next generation of teachers, it is possible to reflect on the ways that American Buddhadharma uses its particular registers to examine and dissolve overt and insidious forms of individualism and materialism.

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Dharma in the West: How are our Youth Learning?

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The Buddha's teachings are considered to be a very well-crafted combination of knowledge and experiential realizations (awareness) on the path to liberation (realization). Buddhist scholars agree that the Buddha taught many teachings according to various different predispositions (for lack of a better English word). The Buddha taught that fundamentally everyone has a unique set of causes and conditions (karma) therefore he gave suitable teachings for appropriate causes and conditions.

Consequently as the Buddhadharma moves to Western secular Christian countries, questions arise about changes in the style of teaching our youth to successfully build a long-term foundation for our Buddhist communities. Should particular attention be paid to ethnic youth[1] in Western countries for them to continue and grow Buddhist traditions in their new country?

It has been long understood and well researched that ethnic young people in contemporary Western environments struggle with cultural and religious expectations from their parents and peer pressure/mainstream culture. They often feel they live in two worlds, where the realities and expectations between school and home/temple are very different.

First of all, one needs to establish if there is in fact a problem with our young Buddhists in New Zealand. Straightforward observation at many Buddhist festivals celebrated at temples reveals very few young people present. Many large temples do not provide formal religious education. For example, in Wellington, out of five main temples only two provides formal Dharma classes and another offers language classes. Auckland has a similar ratio of formalized Dharma classes.

The goal of this paper is to investigate the issue of how ethnic youth in Western countries learn Dharma. Much of the research from Western countries is focused on cultural or religious identity. Only one research has been found that specifically focuses on ethnic youth learning Dharma in Western countries.[2]

Other, revealing research from Canada[3] regarding religious identification studied young people (1.5 generation) from Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist countries.[4] Subjects were selected from random secular places like universities and the research found that the Buddhist youth were the least religiously practicing of the three religions. In fact, researchers had to change the category of 'Most Observant' to 'Religio-culturally based religious seekers'.

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[1] For the purpose of this paper ethnic youth is referring to children and young people with Buddhist parents raised in a non-western country.

[2] Please let me know if there is any I have missed through journal searches and discussions with scholars in the area

[3] Beyer, Peter. 2011. Differential Reconstruction of Religions among Second Generation Immigrant Youth In Canada, Annual Review of Sociology of Religion 2009

[4] 'Religion among Immigrant Youth in Canada': A research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The following is how the youth from Buddhist countries responded when asked about their religious participation.

Orientation to Religious and Cultural Identity among Buddhist Participants by Gender:

	Women	Men	Totals
Religio-culturally based religious seekers	**15** (54.5%)	**7** (37%)	22 (47%)
'A little bit Buddhist'	**8** (28.5%)	**12** (63%)	20 (43%)
Imitative Traditionalists	**3** (11%)	**0** (0%)	3 (6%)
Christians with Buddhist background	**2** (7%)	**0** (0%)	2 (4%)
Totals	28	19	47

Orientation to Religious and Cultural Identity among Hindu Participants by Gender:

	Women	**Men**	**Totals**
Highly Practicing	**6** (15%)	**2** (11%)	*8 (14%)*
Ethno-cultural Hindus	**25** (64%)	**5** (28%)	*30 (53%)*
Non-religious	**8** (21%)	**11** (61%)	*19 (33%)*
Totals	*39*	*18*	*57*

Religious Involvement of Muslims according to Gender:

	Women	*Men*	*Total*
Highly Involved	**28** (48%)	**15** (43%)	*43 (46.2%)*
Moderately to Somewhat Involved	**22**(38%)	**9** (26%)	*33 (33.3%)*
Non-religious	**8** (14%)	**11** (31%)	*19 (20.4%)*
Totals	58	35	93

(Source: *"Religion among Immigrant Youth in Canada"*)

It is interesting that in comparing Buddhist to Hindu and Muslim youth, Beyer finds "Overall, the Buddhist sub-sample shows a rather high correlation between religious orientation and ethno-cultural origin." In other words, Buddhist youth more consistently identify as Buddhist regardless of which country they come from. He further comments that:

Another important common feature that applies to all the Buddhist subgroups … the participants were exposed to Buddhism as they grew up. In most cases, their parents enjoined them to participate in what the family considered Buddhist practice – temple visits, commemorating the ancestors, etc. – but did not place much emphasis on explaining the reason of these practices. Nor, when it came to it, did the parents in most cases insist that the children keep up these practices except often in the family context. Buddhist explanation was minimal; Buddhist practice was desirable but ultimately optional. Leading a morally good life and making a success of oneself, those were much more important. This combined with the attitude expressed by many interviewees, that, in effect, Buddhism is not a religion and should not be pushy or aggressively trying to assert itself, but rather act as a background good, a source of morals and good life practice.'.

From this research in Canada one can see that while the young people identify as Buddhist culturally, they are not religiously practicing to the same degree as similar Hindu and Muslim youth. Beyers also points out that learning can come in many different forms, not just formal classes at a temple and that religious expression can take on different adaptations for Western contexts.

Relevant research

An excellent dissertation called "Dhamma Education: The Transmission and Reconfiguration of the Sri Lankan Buddhist Tradition in Toronto" (Canada) by Venerable Deba Mitra Bhikkhu (2011) is the only research that could be found that directly relates to this topic. While he delves into one particular Dhamma community his original inspiration for his research was noticing the difference in Dhamma education between the Sri Lankan and the Lao's community in Kitchener, Ontario. He explores the Sri Lankan's challenge to preserve their inherited cultural values while accommodating their current situation. Exploring in depth Bhanti, illuminates the intergenerational negotiation of what has been retained, altered, left out and added to the Buddhist tradition. As an ordained Monk he is well placed to compare how Dhamma education occurs in Sri Lanka and in the West as the organizational structures are very different. Not often is the changing role of laypeople in Western countries discussed yet he discusses it with a high level of objectivity, including how being a Sangha effected his research.

He draws parallels and differences to the introduction and establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and that of Buddhism in the West. He speculates that "in the long Buddhist history, this discourse has, perhaps, not met a culture as individualistic as that in North America". He found that the second generation on the second generation's religiousity often carry an individualistic judgement on collective religious expression.

Learning versus teaching

Over the last 30 years in Western countries a lot of attention has been paid to learning styles students may have or employ. This fundamentally challenges the approach of focusing on the teacher and 'what' is being taught refocuses attention to how the student learns. When education is compulsory and delivered to a large number of students there is a perpetual tension between what the teacher is teaching and whether the student is learning. Many educational reformers argue that focusing on how the student is learning is most important. The traditionalists will focus on the importance of content and overall outcomes of a class. It is commonly accepted today that a teacher should actively employ a variety of teaching styles to accommodate a variety of learning styles.

When one explores the learning style aspect of education many branches and sub-sectors become apparent. It is clear that much of the intention is designed to shift the focus away from what the teacher is trying to teach and focus on the student themselves; ie. are they understanding, assimilating or integrating what is being taught? One style doesn't fit all students and so the question arises whether an increase of understanding will arise in more students if a variety of teaching styles is used.

Over the years a plethora of learning style tests have been designed to evaluate (at a cost for the testing process) students' individual learning styles. For example, learning style tests can determine anything from how a student acquires information (e.g. visually or auditory) through to how the learner processes or integrates/assimilates information (e.g. reflects, thinks etc.) or the personality traits that motivate learning (introvert, extrovert, thinker, perceiver etc.).

Most of the learning style research relevant to this paper relates to acquiring English as a second language and minority ethnic communities in a mainstream educational system. Furthermore most of the religious education research focuses on the importance of spiritual and moral education for children and young people; it is Christian based, and not specifically focused on the acquisition of a particular religion in a Western country. There appears therefore to be no explicitly specific research on Buddhist religious education for young people in Western countries.

As for learning styles, the best and most comprehensive study that appears to have been published is called "Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning: A systematic and critical review"[5] (Coffield, Moseley, Hall, Ecclestone 2004). This publication was overseen by the top academics in the world. They systematically reviewed thousands of research publications of these 13 learning style leaders and tried to draw conclusions. While this research paper creates significant frameworks for the field of learning style theories and tests it did concluded further research was required and provide a structure approach to how that research could happen.

Research methodology

A review of numerous papers and research documents, most notably, "Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning: A systematic and critical review"[6], suggested no clear and defensible

[5] Coffield F, Moseley D, Hall E and Ecclestone K (2004a). *Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning: a systematic and critical review. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre, Learning and Skills Development Agency.*

[6] Frank Coffield, Institute of Education University of London, David Moseley University of Newcastle, Elaine Hall

guidance for which learning style testing system to use. In fact, in a personal conversation with the author of this paper, Dr Frank Coffield, Emeritus Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, London University, recommended not using a test but running instead small group interviews with each youth grouping. His main reasoning is that tests are expensive and not always as reliable as one might think and he feels labeling students has unintended consequences. As he is an internationally renowned academic, researcher and educational expert his advice was taken for this research.[7]

This research studied one Muslim and three Buddhist communities during September/ October 2011 in Auckland and Wellington. The main interest of the research was to shed light on young people's religious learning in a Western secular context. Since this is the first of its kind in New Zealand, and possibly internationally, it is important to point out this is exploratory research and further enquiry is very much encouraged.

All group interviews were conducted without adults, teachers, or Sangha present so that the participants could feel free to speak openly. The interviews were recorded with the express permission of the youths. As the voice recorder was small and not very obvious it is unlikely it inhibited the interviewees. The following are the four communities studied.

1. Fo Guang Shan Temple (Auckland)
2. Sri Lankaramaya (New Zealand Sri Lanka Buddhist Trust – Auckland)
3. **Wat** Buddhachaimahanat **Cambodian Temple (Wellington)**
4. Kilbirnie Mosque (Wellington)

The three Buddhist communities were chosen because they represented both Theravada and Mahayana traditions and had different migration histories to New Zealand. Each community was asked if they would allow a half hour to forty-five minute interview with 5-10 young people of secondary school age. While I requested to speak to the Dharma students, I did not realize that the Cambodian class is a language class until I arrived to do the interview. Given that the students were in a learning environment, I decided to continue with the interviews after slightly modifying the questions.

A similar group of Muslim youth were interviewed for overall comparison because as members of a minority religious community they have comparable issues and concerns. A notable difference, though, is the multi-cultural make-up of the mosque. In New Zealand many religious communities establish one central place which initially accommodates different ethnic communities. Over time the ethnic communities often devolve when individually able to support their Sangha. This has been the pattern with the Buddha Theravada communities and is also applicable to the Muslim community. In Wellington one central mosque still remains the focus for 42 different ethnic cultures. In total 26 young people participated in this preliminary research.

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[7] In the next stage of research, testing learning styles will be considered again as it still may be helpful for Dharma teachers to fully understand how different the students' learning styles are or are not.

The following is a brief summary of the groups studied and the temples they are associated with:

Temple Name:	Fo Guang Shan Temple (Auckland)
Number interviewed:	8
Ages:	1 - 11 yrs, 2 - 15 yrs, 1 - 16 yrs, 3 - 18 yrs, 1 - 21 yrs old
Length of time in NZ:	1 for 2 years, 6 for 7-10 years in NZ, and 1 was born in NZ
Cultural backgrounds:	6 Malaysian, 1 Hong Konger, 1 Taiwanese
Languages:	All could speak Mandarin and English, one also spoke Cantonese
Formal Dharma training:	• Under the guidance of the abbess, the youth spend a month during summer holidays living at the temple participating in the life of the temple • Other activities are organized throughout the year, however during school exam time they are encouraged to focus on school. • Language classes for 200-300 students are run at the temple but are separately organized by the Chinese community. Teachers have started to provide a very minimal Dharma talk at the beginning of some of the classes
Temple Name:	Sri Lankaramaya (New Zealand Sri Lanka Buddhist Trust – Auckland)
Number interviewed:	7
Ages:	2 – 13 yrs, 2 – 14 yrs, 1 – 15 yrs, 1 – 16 yrs, 1 – 17 yrs old
Length of time in NZ:	3 – 6-10 yrs, 4 – 12-13 yrs
Cultural backgrounds:	All were Sri Lankan
Languages:	Singhalese and English
Formal Dharma training:	• Dharma school is run every Sunday morning for approximately 60 children and young people • Organized by a junior monk but taught by lay people. Senior monks participate from time to time. • Classes are developed on an achievement basis and students are advanced from one level to the next • Language classes follow in the second half of the morning

Temple Name:	Wat Buddhachaimahanat (Wellington)
Number interviewed:	4
Ages:	1 – 12 yrs, 1 – 14 yrs, 1 – 16yrs, 1 – 28yrs
Length of time in NZ:	All were born in NZ, 3 were second generation Cambodian
Cultural backgrounds:	1 Chinese/Cambodian, 2 Cambodian and the European NZ born was marrying a Cambodian woman.
Languages:	English and learning Cambodian
Formal Dharma training:	• The main form of teaching is language based, and was taught by a junior resident monk. The class takes place while the older adults are at Dharma classes. • Language is seen as important for culture and religious transmission • The junior monk said the attendance was very low because of the Rugby World Cup • One young woman said she had spoken Cambodian as a child but when her family moved to NZ they only spoke English to attain competency in the language. She lost her Cambodian as a result.

Name	Kilbirnie Mosque (Wellington)
Number interviewed:	7 (girls)
Ages:	2 – 13 yrs, 4 – 14 yrs, 1 – 15 yrs old
Length of time in NZ:	4 born in NZ, 3 moved within the last 4 years
Cultural backgrounds included:	Egyptian, Palestinian, Somalian, Indian and NZ NB 42 cultures attend the mosque
Languages:	4 had English as a second language
Formal Islamic training:	• Classes based on achievement not age are organized and taught by lay people every Sunday morning. • Classes have been running for many years and developed by a lay NZ trained teacher. • The program is distinctive in that it accommodates 42 cultures, with Arabic as the common religious language. It is also segregated by gender.

The group interview questions acted as a guide with spontaneous probing for further elaboration or exploration. While not originally intended, questions probing the understanding of basic Buddhist topics were asked of interviewees following the formal interview.[8]

The following are the questions and overall indicative comments made by the youth during the group interviews. It is important to realize that the questions were designed as a general preliminary enquiry into this topic. Note that when students were asked about how they learn or what makes it difficult for them to learn, their answers were likely not directly related to the teaching at the relevant religious institution.

[8] The questions were consistently asked of the three Buddhist groups, but were not designed to determine whether interviewees were 'good' Buddhists. The questions were intended to be indicative only.

How is the temple class different from school classes?			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *Go against your desires* • *Friends are different* • *School is more technical* • *School teaches, temple guides* • *School has a set plan* • *Supported by the abbess who guides us* • *No distractions* • *More focused and better concentration* • • *Tailored to the way we understand*	• *No real curriculum* • *Laid back* • *Shorter* • *How much you know not based on age* • *Nice teachers* • *Spoon fed – repetitive* • *Go slowly* • *Focused step by step* • *With my friends*	• *A lot smaller here* • *More interactions* • *More laid back*	• *Comfort zone – no discrimination* • *Can practice my religion* • *Learning the science behind my religion* • *Sisterly relationships* • *Feel closer to God* • *(to be blunt) it's more disorganized, casual and flexible* • *No punishment for being late* • *You come here for yourself* • *Teachers are like aunties: they watch you grow up* • *You don't feel self-conscious about being Muslim*

What makes it easy for you to learn? For example, if you were to learn to swim / do something new.			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *Need friends away* • *Doing it yourself* • *No pressure* • *Practice* • *Need it step by step* • *Watch it first* • *Determination – not giving up* • *Linking ideas*	• *Breaking it down* • *Like it on paper* • *With friends* • *Like to write things down (x2)*	• *Start simple then work into more complex* • *Have to want to learn, be patient and motivated* • *Good teacher* • *Be with others* • *Good environment* • *Comfortable* • *Learn one thing over and over then move on*	• *Listen to everyone in the conversation* • *Watching TV and movies* • *Reading* • *Do practical things*

What makes learning difficult for you? Examples?			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *No support* • *Incorrect environment* • *Don't like discouraging comments* • *Intimidating style* • *Too many things at once* • *Bad habits (sleeping in)*	• *When its noisy* • *Learning a religion you have to be committed* • *Friends can be a distraction* • *Lack of time*	• *Rushing* • *Learning to read is really hard* • *Rude teachers who interrupt, ignore me* • *Don't like teachers who favor certain people – only smart people* • *Impatient teachers are not good at all* • *Doesn't include everyone*	• *Being disrespected* • *Being embarrassed* • *Rushed*

How useful is what you learn here (temple/mosque) to the rest of your life?			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *Cooking* • *Gardening* • *General knowledge* • *Habits of living* • *Doing chores* • *Taking every chance you get* • *More optimistic*	• *Take on for our kids* • *Moral foundation* • *5 precepts are important* • *You learn how to relate* • *Behave properly in the world* • *Be a better person*	• *For the rest of my life* • *My grandmother doesn't know English* • *My fiancé is Cambodian* • *Family reasons* • *Cool to know another language* • *I taught my family*	• *Explain how it's going to help* • *Passing on the knowledge (children)* • *Listen to everyone's conversation* • *Boundaries – living in a non-Muslim country* • *Respect*

• *Small things in life – more awareness* • *Openings and closings* • *Eating – how you eat reflects your mind – more elegant*	• *What to share and not share – when* • *Helps us at parties to see the benefit of the precepts*	*English and they dropped Cambodian* • *Visiting Cambodia* • *Help to get a job with 2 languages*	• *You appreciate why things are the way they are* • *Why to be careful of what you eat* • *Aware of what you do because you will be judged* • *Faith in you is strong*

What makes a good teacher?			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *Supportive* • *Understands* • *Changes with the changes of the student* • *Able to adapt* • *Good habits i.e. eating and speech*	• *When they are clear* • *Go slowly* • *Revise a lot*	• *Calm* • *Inclusive (doesn't just like some people)* • *Willing to be patient until you understand* • *Open to opinions and new ways* • *Compromise (do class outside)* • *Know their subject and what they are doing* • *Good teaching methods* • *"Act like a rock"*	• *Listen and doesn't yell* • *Doesn't embarrass you* • *Explains clearly* • *Respects* • *Helps* • *Listens* • *Likes a teacher to be a bit bossy so you know your limits* • *Lots of discussion*
What do you like most about these classes?			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *The teaching on the after-life (x3)* • *Practical tree trimming* • *Learning the way trees grow and metamorphosis*	• *More dialogue here – able to question more* • *No set curriculum so we can go over again and again* • *Classes are structured by knowledge* • *Not as intense* • *Really like when the monks come* • *Games and stuff* • *Theatre performance*	• *Free time* • *Humor* • *Near the end we have a small whiteboard quiz in pairs*	• *Being with my friends who I have known all my life* • *Very supportive* • *Can be who I am*
How could these classes be improved?			
Chinese Mahayana	**Sri Lankan**	**Cambodian**	**Muslim**
• *Use Buddhism to learn break dancing* • *More classes – weekend, holiday for a few hours* • *More time to think* • *Decision making* • *Don't like waking up early*	• *More consistent teachers* • *Parents are good* • *For the younger kids it should be more serious* • *More games* • *Newsletter*	• *Doesn't need improving* • *Some can speak already so it's a bit fast* • *Food* • *Prizes* • *Revise previous lessons* • *Comfortable* • *Stress free* • *Need more clarity on why each person is here (I only want to learn to speak Cambodian)*	• *More fun* • *More twists e.g. taking the class outside* • *Translate a bit more* • *Learn more what and why* • *Power points and other IT* • *The cultural teachers just want you to recite* • *A Muslim high school*

All of the groups appeared to have a good grasp of what they liked and didn't like when it came to learning. They all enjoyed their religious classes for what appeared typical teenager reasons – their friends were there.

It was interesting to find that the Fo Guang Shan Temple in Auckland provided a month-long program over the summer holidays. While not many temples in the West can accommodate this, it provides an interesting alternative or complement to a weekly program. Not only does it provide an opportunity for youth to study but also practice Buddhism without making a large commitment, such as taking temporary robes as might be expected in South East Asia. Both the Fo Guang Shan Temple and Sri Lankaramaya put significant effort into supporting the mainstream educational achievements of their youth. It is in fact an explicit priority above and beyond the Dharma education at the temple. As this research timing was nearing the end of the school year, attendance was down for both temples.

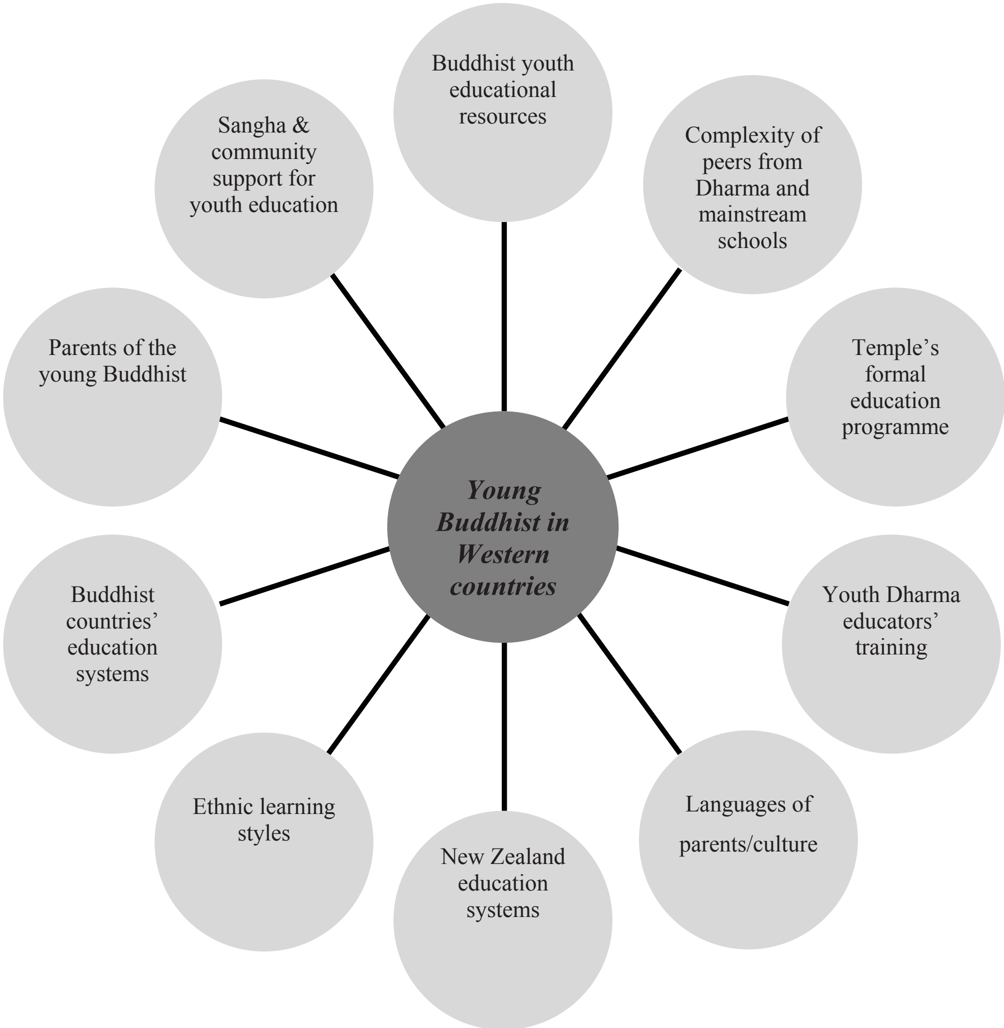
Most noticeably, the Muslim young women repeatedly spoke about how they were treated at school. On three occasions I had to redirect their attention away from the discrimination they were experiencing from fellow students, teachers, and administrators in their mainstream schools. All but one young woman wore a hijab (head covering) at school. The feeling of discrimination most likely contributed to how comfortable they felt at the mosque. Buddhists, of course, unlike Muslim girls or Sikh boys, do not wear very visible forms of religious expression. In retrospect and given the discrimination the young women reported, the added complexity of the Islamophobia these young people endure, it might be better in the future to compare young Buddhists with Hindu youth.

The two different Buddhist traditions had different subtleties, as one might expect. Mahayana youth referred to mindfulness, awareness and repressing desires while the Theravada youth referred to moral guidance, precepts and right conduct.

Random basic questions about Buddhism were informally asked to gauge responses (only Buddhist groups were questioned because I am not qualified to ask Muslims appropriate indicative questions). While the questions were not comprehensive, examples were: name one of the Triple Gem/Three Refuges; what's the First Noble Truth? Second Noble Truth? Tell me your favorite story of the Buddha. The Sri Lankan and Chinese Mahayana students were very quick to answer and appeared to have a grasp of Buddhism that was appropriate for their age.[9] The Cambodian language class could only answer that the Buddha was born in India. Appreciating that assessment, especially across Buddhist traditions, could be fraught with debate; there may be a need for a benchmarking system that can contribute information about how well teaching efforts are succeeding. This is done by the Sri Lankan community. Between the way the youth conducted themselves in the interviews and their answers to the simple Buddhist questions, they appear to be on the way to being knowledgeable and behaving as one might hope a young Buddhist would. This would be the same, albeit limited, observation of the young Muslim women. The bigger question becomes who is not attending these classes and why?

The following is a diagram showing various influences a young Buddhist in the West experiences.

[9] In fact, I was impressed and pleasantly surprised.



This endeavors to scope the issues surrounding this topic and put the young person in the center of the discussion without undermining the fact that many communities in NZ and other Western countries are still in the initial stages of resettlement and may have other more pressing issues facing them.

As this research is only a preliminary scoping of some of the issues related to our youth Dhamma education, many further research topics remain, including:

1. The young people who are not attending classes regularly need immediate attention to determine why they are not attending. Such an investigation might include:
    a. Starting with success – interviewing the current students again as they will know about their friends who could attend but aren't or are not regularly attending;
    b. Interviewing those young people whose parents/grandparents are connected to the temple yet never attend Dharma classes; and
    c. Then finding out from young people who have never attended why not.

4. Prioritized attention to determine why temples are not providing formal classes.
   a. Have they run programs in the past? What was the program's strength? Why did the program stop?
   b. Does the temple see it as important or a priority?
   c. Are there enough young people to warrant running a program?
   d. How has the temple tried to find or attract young people? Does it have parents' support, community leadership's support?
   e. Does the temple have qualified Sangha or parents to run such a program?
   f. Would the temple consider liaising with another temple to provide formal classes for their youth?

3. The actual education program at temples who do offer formal Dharma classes needs review to determine whether any further opportunities could be explored, for example, whether:
   a. Timing fits the young person's (and their parents) rhythm and school demands

Programs can be extended. For example, if regular weekly classes work, could bi-monthly weekend programs work? Other such options might provide a continuum of opportunity for young people to learn more Buddhism.

4. The teachers of the programs may or may not be open to further professional development particularly with regard to how to incorporate various styles of teaching. Testing the youth learning styles could provide valuable feedback for teachers.

5. Developing a benchmarking system for monitoring a young person's progress without being too much like school exams. For example, the Sri Lankan temple in Auckland has a system that they feel appropriately evaluates a young person's progress.

6. What do parents think of the children Dharma education? What do they want for their children? Could anything be done to support them?

7. Investigate a regular feedback loop that gives teachers constructive advice from students.

8. There are many very successful Dharma education program in other Western countries.
   a. What successful program could provide assistance and inspiration for others?

9. From enquiries in NZ there appears to be no national or international opportunities for youth Dharma educators to come together to share expertise, resources, and experiences. Therefore further exploration is required to determine:
   a. Whether there a need or interest for this form of gathering. Would it be enough of a priority to pursue?
   b. If communities would share within and across traditions, recognizing ethnic culture plays a role in the motivation for providing these classes
   c. The possibility of sharing Dharma resources within and across traditions
   d. The possibility of a national or international opportunity to facilitate the sharing of educational resources on a website which respected ethnic and traditional differences.

Conclusion:

The topic of how our young ethnic Buddhists learn the Buddhadharma in a Western context is both important and complex. This paper probed the topic with young Buddhists from three communities and one Muslim community in New Zealand. The research has scoped many of the issues related to how we may approach questions about our young learning the Buddhadharma in the West.

When one compares the Muslim community generally and the numbers of youth participating in religious study specifically, neither appears to be much different from Buddhist communities. Both communities appear to have committed, knowledgeable and fulfilled young people. The bigger question is who is not attending and why. An additional question for the Buddhist communities is why are some temples offering Dharma classes and other are not? The Buddha has provided us with the teaching styles for all forms of predispositions; are we utilizing them sufficiently for our youth in Western countries?

May all beings be soothed by the cool blessings of enlightenment!

Om ah hum! Om ah hum! Om ah hum!

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The Role of Rules in Personal Development and Interpretations of the Vinaya in Western Countries

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This paper deals with the issues surrounding, the teaching of a course on 'Buddhism and Law', in a Law School. To complete the analysis of the issues involved, I firstly, outline the background details of the students and my personal background in teaching 'Buddhism and Law'. Secondly, I address what I see the pedagogical challenges in this course and how I attempt to meet them. Thirdly, as the Vinaya is the basic code which defines monastic life and the students and are enthusiastic 'rule-interpreters', I concentrate the rest of the paper on the way I deal with the Vinaya in this course.

Students opt for this course as a change to traditional courses (for example commercial law, taxation law). The students are in their fourth or fifth year and have mostly completed arts degrees. Students are educated in the social sciences and in particular have a good background in legal interpretation. Many students have an interest in philosophy and in religious issues generally. Some of the students are from ethnic communities, although very few have Buddhist backgrounds. I have found them very curious about Buddhism and they ask many questions about issues such as reincarnation, karma, the idea of 'no self' and they raise such issues is 'Buddhism a religion or philosophy?'

I am interested in poststructuralist approaches to religion and in particular the work of Foucault. I mention Foucault here as his work suggests particular ways to approach religious texts, the constructed role of knowledge, the structure of institutionalized discipline and the nature of transgressions. I also introduce new perspectives from 'ritual studies', ideas of 'performance theory' and modern hermeneutical approaches to religious texts.

How do I teach the course? This course follows the syllabus of many courses on Buddhism, namely the Brahmanical background to Buddhism, the life story of the Buddha and the main teachings of the Buddha dealing especially the four noble truths and the eight folds path. Students are interested in Buddhist ethics and they are curious about the collection of the rules governing deportment and etiquette. They also wonder how, given the fact that flexibility is needed for the spiritual life, why the rules are so strict.

What are the pedagogical rationales for such a course? What are its goals? I deal with the former question first and the later question in the conclusion.

Students, who undertake the course, are competent in legal analysis and the notions of legal positivism. I attempt to show that this form of legal reasoning is a highly constructed and paradigmatic form of legal analysis from a particular historical and a philosophical period. The issue then arises how we might interpret Buddhist texts? I show that an approach to the Buddhist law (Vinaya) requires a different form of analysis than that associated with western forms of legal analysis.

Most translators/ commentators have seen the Vinaya as a law. I suggest to the students that such a form of description misrepresents its nature. To present this argument I explain (a) the background European notions or expectations that saw Indian religious texts as 'law'. This involves a critique of Edward Said's work *Orientalism* (1978) and whether his insight is relevant to the finding that the Vinaya was a form of law in the European sense of that term. (b) The course then explores the inadequacy of the appellation of 'law' to the Vinaya texts as they involve ritual practices, the training of moral virtues, the shaping of monks and nuns through the institution of both formal restraints and the shaping of subjectivity through a degree of freedom.

The Vinaya as a Training Scheme

A common approach to law regards 'law' as a series of general expectations that require obedience. Does it follow that the Vinaya is a form of law or is it merely a form of convention much like the rules of a club? However, the Vinaya is regarded, a related issue is, 'does the Vinaya require consistent obedience, or are the narratives in the *Vibhaṅga* merely narratives or body of past precedents (that is, wise actions) against which proposed deeds may be evaluated?

Scholars usually start the critique on the meaning of the Vinaya by noting that the Vinaya embodies the means by which an individual monastic may achieve the soteriological goal of Buddhism and that it determines the manner in which the collective community may sustain its identity (Holt 1981:3).

The term Vinaya has usually translated as 'discipline'. Hara has surveyed all the uses of this word in Pāli and Sanskrit literature, argues the word is originally a verbal action noun (*nomina actionis*) formulated by the verbal route vi-ni -which means 'drive out' or 'removal' (Hara 2007: 285).

Is the Vinaya an Ethical System?

It is clear that Buddhism is based on a moral foundation, as it is clear that an essential part of Buddhism is an ethical system of thought which emphases moral purity in thought, word and deed (*sīla*) (Gethin 1998; Saddhatissa 1987).

However, an ethical life is not the same as an Enlightened one. The Buddhist emphasis is on being aware, rather than being good (Loy 2010:1241). An externally enforced moral code or a systemic theory of ethics is not part of traditional Buddhism, as far as we awaken to our true nature (Harris 1998:42-44). While some of the rules in the Vinaya are deontological in that they are moral absolutes, in the sense if you commit murder certain consequences will follow, the precepts and the training 'rules' (*sikkhapas*) generally are not commands. They are rather something where adherence is beneficial.

One aspect of the inquiry on the nature of the Vinaya is the issue of the extent that the Vinaya, in particular embodies ethics. Students are familiar with different western moral theories such as the approaches within deontological ethics, consequentialism, virtue ethics and ethical particularism.

Keown has argued that Buddhist ethics are a type of 'virtue ethics' (Keown 2001:25-26). Sidwerits argues for a consequential approach to Buddhist ethics, while Clayton argues that Buddhist ethics are best understood as a combination of virtue ethics and utilitarianism (Sidwerits 2003; Clayton 2006). While this short summary of various approaches do not represent the subtleness of these positions, students are open to the conversation that 'Buddhist ethical theory' is distinct approach and may not be fitted into western forms of ethical theory.

Bronwyn Finnegan writes that one 'might wonder whether Buddhism is in need of ethical theorization'. The fact she argues, 'that no systematic theory was developed within Indo-Tibetan tradition gives one pause to reflect' (Finnegan forthcoming). Hallisey takes this absence to indicate that Buddhist intellectuals employed a kind of 'ethical particularism', which recognizes a diversity of values (Hallisey 1996). Hallisey takes this absence to indicate that Buddhist intellectuals developed an approach which was not monolithic as Buddhism utilized more than one moral theory and that it drew its ideas of virtue and moral development from stories and that it employed a kind of 'ethical particularism' (Hallisey 1996, 1997).

Is the Vinaya a Form of Generalized Norms Based on the Idea of 'Obedience'

Legal anthropologists and ethnologists have long sought to find law in non-western societies seeking criteria, which may be used to classify certain cultural content as 'law'. This western scientific project within legal anthropology and comparative law has been seen as Eurocentric as it is based on the formulation of 'representation' of criteria that can be generalized across other societies. Western forms of legal education have also generally assume that 'laws' are a series of generalizations and that law enshrines the idea of obedience to a form of centralized authority. However, some social orders are not ruled based. In fact searching for 'law' often gives a distorted view as little attention is given to power relationships or wider forms of cultural relationships (Eberhard 2005).

Given the issues within 'ethical particularism' and the approach to law in western societies, the challenge for students is to form an opinion about the Vinaya as a form of law, as a training scheme, or group convention.

To discuss these matters we discuss the limitations of the legal model as regards the Vinaya. It is generally assumed by scholars that adherence to the rules is required. Huxley seems to endorse a different approach, as he argues that in a personal situation of any particular hypothetical monk or nun, that the Vinaya is not a code as such, but more a compendium of factual situations for each monastic to consider as regards their own situation (Huxley 2002:208). He seems to suggest that a monastic has a personal choice as to whether or not he/she should follow a rule and this choice may not be in breach of a rule.

In line with Indian understandings on religious texts, is obedience required to 'rules'? For instance, Clarke, has shown in the case of non-Pāli Vinayas, that in the case of an offence against *Pārājaka* 1, that an offender was given a penance and not necessarily expelled from the Sangha (Clarke 2009a; 2009b).

Here I might foreshadow a point elsewhere concerning the nature of the Dharmaśāstra (Voyce 2010). Here I refer to the debate over the nature of these texts and the extent they were utilized in decision-making. I follow the approach, that texts acted as forms of suggestions which may be utilized along with other local texts or with regard to other local nuances. This approach posits the Dharmaśāstra, not as a code, but 'rather as a situation-specific tool if appropriate (Menski 2003:125). The idea of a Vinaya as a legal *regula* with 'dos and donts' in what we might call the traditional European sense of rules, needs reconsideration.

Is the Vinaya a Specific Type of Medicinal Treatment?

Huxley asks 'is the Vinaya law?' He concludes 'not he considers if you insist law should have a sovereign and sanction' (2002:131). Huxley points out that the Buddha should be seen like a physician recommending medicine: 'the training may be hard, it may be unpleasant but it will be good for you' (1996:142). To support this approach Huxley cites the Buddha who says: 'if a Bhikkhu becomes guilty he must go to the Vinaya teacher ...who admonishes him: 'I am like a physician, you are like a patient.. you must tell me each and everything'.[1]

Huxley concludes that the Vinaya is 'halfway between the medical model and the legal model'. Huxley further applies Max Weber's reasons for rule adherence. He argues that the Vinaya rules are obeyed out of traditional reasons ('because we've always done it this way') rational ('because it make sense to do it this way') or charismatic ('because my hero has told me to do start doing it this way'). Huxley argues that the Vinaya appeals to all these models (Huxley 1996:143).

In an Encyclopedia entry on *Legal Systems of the World* published in 2002, Huxley returns to the issue of Vinaya as law. He argues that the Vinaya should not be seen as law according to positivist conceptions of law such as laid down by Jeremy Bentham and Hans Kelsen. He argues that the institutional form of definition in this code is different from that found in the codes such as Hammurabi and Justinian (Huxley 2002:207). He goes on to say that 'the fundamental attitude to causation leads Buddhist lawyers to prefer situations rather than rules'. As there is naturally disagreement about the application of rules the best approach, Huxley argues, in practice is to regard each rule is 'defeasible' or at best as a 'rule of thumb' that is the 'summation of past experiences that, for one cause or another, may not apply to the instant case' (Huxley 2002:208).

Vinaya and the Notion of Transgression

Buddhist monastic rules regulate nearly every aspect of monastic life. Should the rules be seen as a collection of 'rules' or 'guides' which allow or even necessitate permissible violation? Some students suggest that the approach of 'ethical particularism' in the light of ideas on 'transgression' suggests such a possibility.

This interpretation of rules as regards sexual behavior indicates that violation of rules or what I call transgression may have been part of the rule making system. I explore this issue in the context of Foucault's and Bataille's ideas on transgression. Following this line of thought

[1] Shan-Chien-P'i-P'o-Sha (1970:359-362).

I examine how conduct, not normally allowed within a legitimized setting was acceptable within a particular framework. In other words, the Vinaya may have acted as a set of guides for those in need of a certain style of discipline and for others a regime mechanism to be transcended.

Bataille suggests that rules should be seen as more than prohibitions. Rules also imply 'transgressions' (Bataille 1986: 65). In other words, if we examine the relationship between the taboo (for example the Vinaya rule against sexual intercourse) and the transgression of the rule on the prohibition of sex, I suggest we may find that the taboo is not an absolute phenomenon. In fact, 'prohibition' and 'transgression' form an ensemble that defines social life (Crapanzano 2004:136). As Foucault writes:

> the limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were not absolutely uncross able and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows (Foucault 1999a:60).

Foucault indicated that it was only when the taboo was violated that the full force of the taboo was experienced. Transgression involves a breaking down of established patterns, through excess or violation, and thus presented the opportunity for the transgressor to experience a new kind of subjectivity. To Foucault the religiously inspired and transgressive sexual experience was more intense than rule based conformity, as it gestured towards the ultimate experience of enlightenment and an ecstasy in common with the divine (Foucault 1999a) .

This argument about sexuality prompts the question as to 'what was the Buddhist attitude toward sex (i.e. sexual behavior) in ancient India?' Was it regarded as sinful and 'bad'[2] as with Christians in early Christian times? In Buddhism, sexual behavior may be seen as an activity, which was not necessarily 'bad' but rather as problematic as it promoted distraction (Gross 2000:1115). In the context of the rules for monks and nuns, sexual intercourse was not really the problem: the problem was the moment of 'letting go' and making sex happen (Gyatso 2005:285).

This view of sexuality combined with the Buddhist view of the body (in some contexts noted as 'foul and disgusting') opens up new ways of regarding sexuality and the problems of desire in Buddhism. Should we examine the internal conquest of desire we may see that the concern of the Vinaya was not over physical action as such; rather the battle was over the purity in the mind (Foucault 1999b).

The Role of Confession in the Vinaya

What is the role of 'confession' in the religious life generally? Confession involves the 'making known or acknowledgment of ones faults or wrong doings'.[3] Many students have ideas of confession from Catholic origins. However; the word 'confession' requires a culturally specific definition.

Confession is often associated with the full admission of personal guilt for misdemeanors. In Christianity confession was originally part of the sacrament of penance, which involves contrition,

[2] This assessment, as I later show about Christian views, is an overstatement given the disparity of views concerning sexuality in time and place. For a more balanced view, see Price (2000: 1156-1158).

[3] *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1973:395).

confession, satisfaction and absolution. The institution presupposes a theory of individual guilt, a moral order against which sins are committed and a system of authority, which can receive sins and give absolution.

This approach needs adjustment in the context of early Buddhism, as there is no equivalent concept of what is called 'sin' in Buddhism as understood by Christianity. In Buddhism, the root of evil is ignorance and false views (Rahula 1972:3). Furthermore, in Theravāda Buddhism there is no list of transgressions, which can be dissolved by mechanistic absolution, as Theravāda Buddhism does not contain the concept of penances. In other words, the consequences of ones actions cannot be escaped as 'kamma ripens without fail.'[4] At the same time Buddhist, monks did not have sacramental powers to absolve misdemeanors.

What are the mental and physical stages a 'confessor' has to go through in the Vinaya? My approach has been to use Foucault's writings to examine Buddhist texts to indicate how confession may have acted as part of the disciplinary process within a Buddhist monastic setting. Together with the students, I discuss the four aspects of how monks and nuns may be shaped by the confession process.

Firstly, the confessor had to address the ethical territory he/she breached. This would mean the confessor reflecting on the precepts and the idea of *sila* or morality. Under Buddhist teachings, consideration might also be given to the nature of conditioned existence, and how wrongdoing may have been motivated by unskillful behavior, such as greed hatred or delusion.

At the same time, the confessor had to convince the confessant that he/she was telling the truth and that the confessor was revealing their genuine motivations. Implicit in this exchange was the need for the confessor to establish to his or hearers that that the confessant also believed in the confessors explanations (Foucault 1993: 211 fn. 28).

Secondly, there is another level within the 'examination' or the 'clinical procedure' offered by the recitation of the confession ritual in the context of the Pātimokkha recital. This is that the confessor had to frame their action into the appropriate legal category as a means of bringing awareness to their actions and so that they should see the action as an offence. Thus by this process the confession enhanced the subjects own diagnostic examination.

This process aided the confessor's self-examination and promoted his or her own consequent self-regulation (Prado 2000: 99). This type of examination was consequently a form of self-discipline as it involved self-scrutiny, self-evaluation, about the conduct of a monastics life, thus inviting consequent avowal, inspection, evaluation, and self-regulation (Rose 1999: 245).

This subjective process has a third aspect in that it forced the penitent to search through the inexhaustible linkages related to sensuality and sexual desire, so to unravel the web of desire and ignorance as to his/her mental condition. In other words, the penitent must 'be forever extending as far as possible the range of their thoughts however insignificant and innocent this may be' (Foucault 1999b: 195).

[4] See A. V. 292. See also Attwood (2008); Gombrich (2006, 108).

Fourthly, should the confession pertain to sexual behavior, however widely conceived, this type of conduct represented a rich area for religious experience and transformation. Confessions about the body and its desires serve as an index to character, individuality and the ability of a monastic to forge their own subjectivity).

The recitation works on other levels as it disburdens and sets a person free at the same time the recitation creates a bond of meaning where individual wrongdoers are bought into line and social relationships. The recitation of the Pātimokkha has 'a work like ability to transform and bring into the listeners mind something that was not there before'.

How does Buddhism see sexual desire? Sexual desire was regarded in early Buddhism as a subset and as a special case of *kāmaccanda* or sensual desire generally. What was 'productive' about the power relations between the confessor and the confessant was that sensual desire was linked to sexual desire.[5] Sexual desire, rather than being repressed, could thus be transformed into Enlightenment.

Thus, discipline on the 'productive body' produces knowledge about the body, the self and the power relations in which it was implicated. As Faure[6] argues the facing of sexual and sensual desire represents a 'pivoting' (*Skt. parāvṛtti*) moment in that by confronting sexual energy transformation occurs (Faure 1998: 4).

Conclusion

Engler recently canvassed the notion that western dharma practitioners need to deal with the different forms of western conditioning (issues of identity, sexuality, career ideals etc.), as part of their development (Engler 2003:42-47). While this paper does not canvases at length these various issues, I see students as experiencing internal conflict, which may be labeled as the 'legal conditioning' of students as 'professional subjects, common in western forms of entrepreneurial culture. The process of overcoming this form of identity limitation and the openness to read texts in a different way may help students find new ways to understand religious/ legal texts found in indigenous cultures and religious legal systems. I itemize two areas where these factors emerge.

Firstly, some scholars have argued that even with the demise of the influence of religion, the category retains its uncontested and 'pretheoretical' privilege. In other words, students still carry around Christianity's essential terms even though they may see themselves as non-Christians (Balaganadhara 1993: 284-5).

Buddhist narratives might start with the situation of the primal conditions of ignorance, its consequent suffering, moving on with the intention of awakening, culminating into the insight of emptiness of all conditioned existence and the liberation of all sentient beings (Payne 2006:48). This sequence may easily be framed into the movement in Christian terms from creation and fall to

[5] One view on the Buddhist notion of desire is that 'desire' is not limited to sexual desire as sexual desire is assimilated in all forms of sensual desire. For instance, carnal desires are associated with hunger and thirst or more exactly the eating of meat and drinking alcohol. Consequently, non-desire implies not only chastity, but vegetarianism and sobriety (Faure 1998: 17-18).

[6] While Faure may be writing on issues contained within Yogacara philosophy his analysis is appropriate here, see Glassman (2003:764).

redemption. While this journey may be similar, in Buddhist experience my point is not to deny the universal parallels involved in the unfathomable human journey for meaning, but rather the dangers of not seeing each cultural journey in terms of its own experience. [7]

Secondly, many law students understand law as being based on the values within our modern form of culture, on such ideas of self-hood [8] and the centrality of the notions of 'authority' and 'obedience'. Davis advises, as a corrective, that this approach to law 'is hopelessly exceptional, limited historically to recent centuries and geographically by and large to European countries and their current and formal colonies' (Davis 2007:243).

Some of these assumptions (ideas of self, sexuality identity, and 'career institutionalization') limit students in the context of legal institutions which produce professionally skilled legal identities. As vocational discourses, become normalized: students accept these fixed forms of identity not because they are compelled but because it is normal to do so and to fail to do so would be abnormal' (James 2004: 604-5; Ball 2007).

[7] Katz contends that mystical experience found in various world religions of the world are different from one another because the cultural contexts in which they arise are different see Katz (1978); Nagatomo (2002).

[8] Anthropologists have shown that the idea of an autonomous, atomistic individual is not reflected in many indigenous cultures where the model is relational and one of mutual dependence. Gell (1998) for instance speaks of 'distributed personhood'.

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Bridging Science and Spirituality through Buddha's Middle Way to Knowledge

Susmita Barua

"All Scientific knowledge is provisional.
Everything that Science "knows,"
even the most mundane facts and long-established theories,
is subject to reexamination as new information comes in."
– Scientific American editorial, December 2002

Much of our contemporary schooling is dominated by the Western materialist scientific worldview. The worldview (German word *Weltanschauung)* sets the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual, group or society. It encompasses the entirety of the individual or society's knowledge and point-of-view including natural philosophy, dharma, ethics, and code of behavior. Worldview develops within the context of language, culture and commerce and conditions the general mindset, mental models, perception and volitional habits of human beings. It is significant that the ancient path discovered by Buddha that set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion is called The Middle Way. This way of moderation and wisdom is nothing other than the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. "Avoiding both of these extremes *(of self-indulgence and self-denial, and everything exists and nothing exists)*, the middle way realized by the Tathagata — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding."[1] This paper advocates the view that The Middle Way can be rediscovered today as a way to Knowledge that may bridge the gaps in the worldview of Material Science and Spiritual Science.

The purpose of this paper is to explore a few significant points of departure between the Buddhist and modern Scientific approach to knowledge. The Sanskrit word 'Veda' means knowledge. Vedas (500–1000 BCE) belong to the sacred texts that are said to be 'revealed' to rishis and rishikas of ancient India. However, the founders of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism denied the authority of Vedas. Buddha in particular spoke against blind faith, dogmatic beliefs, rituals, animal sacrifice to please gods and the belief that spiritual knowledge comes from memorizing sacred texts or hereditary privilege held by upper caste Brahmins in India. Unlike Vedic-Brahmanism, the renunciate ascetic tradition of Shramana is a non-Vedic heterodox movement that existed parallel to Vedic Hindu tradition. 'Shrama' means labor or making personal effort to perform austerities to attain liberation.

The word 'science' comes from Latin "scientia" meaning knowledge. Science is a process of gathering knowledge of natural world and human-social behavior using the scientific method of observation, empirical research, hypothesis, repeatable experiment, measurement, and conclusion. Modern notion of science and scientist date only to the 19th century. The Oxford English Dictionary

[1] Thanissaro Bhikkhu's Translation. Dhammachakkapavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion; Samyutta Nikaya 56.11. www.accesstoinsight.org

dates the origin of the word “scientist” to 1834. For what we call Science today used to be called *Natural Philosophy* since classical antiquity. It involved study of physical universe from very large to very small. Newton called his famous book *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy (1687)* and Francis Beacon believed that he had provided a new method for natural philosophy.

Spirituality is an inner path of contemplative practice that allows anyone to discover the nature of mind-reality-self and one’s connection to living Universe, God or Great Spirit. Religion came from the Latin word *religare,* which means: “to tie, to bind.” Organized religion usually adopts and institutionalizes a worldview and belief system in the authority of an external supernatural God, savior or gods; sacred or revealed scriptures, moral codes, sacred symbols, rituals, liturgy, commentary by scholars and hierarchy of priests, monks and clerics. Dhamma, as Buddha taught is not a religion, but a way of life that is noble and directed to inner peace, happiness and freedom of humankind by ending suffering through right understanding. The Middle Way helped the spread of Buddha’s teachings around different cultures without war and violence. It has been a healing force as it reduces conflicts of heart and mind and polarizations of views and values within self, society and cultures through right understanding.

The Noble Eightfold Path that leads to knowledge, vision, cessation of kamma is a complete coherent path for opening the psycho-spiritual potential for Awakening (*Bodhi*) inherent in all human beings. The path must be walked and developed in the relative by practitioners of each generation in different time and cultures. A simple way to propagate Dharma in the modern world would be to translate the Triple Refuge as taking refuge to supreme Knowledge (of Buddha), Truth (of Dhamma) and Wisdom of the Noble Ones (Sangha). According to the commentaries there are three factors that defile the going for refuge — ignorance, doubt, and wrong views. If one does not understand the reasons for going for refuge, the meaning of taking refuge, or the qualities of the refuge-objects, this lack of understanding is a form of ignorance which corrupts the going for refuge.

The Buddhist term ‘*putthujjana*’ describes ordinary world ling, monk and layperson who still possess all the ten fetters binding to the round of rebirths and yet to reach any of the four stages of awakening of *ariya-puggala*. Both the Triple Gems and Noble Eightfold Path factors can be deeply realized in a personal, interpersonal, transpersonal and transcendental domains. The sutta on ‘right view’ (*Sammaditthi Sutta*) as expounded by Venerable Sariputta goes to the heart of Buddha’s core teachings and can be understood first on conceptual and mundane level (*lokiya*) of intellectual understanding and the secondly on nonconceptual experiential level. The latter supramundane level *(lokuttara)* brings true emancipation from the cycle of repeated suffering due to greed, aversion and delusion. All non-sectarian Buddha dharma practitioners in all traditions need to study the core teachings under right view to have a proper orientation to Dhamma practice.

Modern western empirical science has given us the most impressive intellectual concepts and ideas since the 16th century but it has also created a duality of mind and matter. Our education is failing to address large systemic problems in human society and economy because education is sheltered from actual experience of ‘dukkha’ in human social life. As such, our leaders are often missing the heart connection and heart’s intelligence. If we do not see, recognize and accept suffering in our own experience, then there is no further possibility of psychological movement to recognize cause of suffering, no prospect for ending of suffering and no path. The Middle Way connects the world of spirituality and science of our world through development of the faculty and spiritual power of mindful awareness, the first of seven factors of enlightenment.

There are four dimensions to our nature: the body and its feeling sensations (vedana), and the mind and its contents. These provide four avenues for the establishing of awareness taught by Buddha in *Satipatthana*. Since all the six sense doors are contained in the body, every contact of the outside world is at the body level. The constant awareness thorough understanding of impermanence of vedana in body-mind stream is known in Pali as *sampajana.* The research done by Institute of Heart Math shows that human heart emits powerful electro-magnetic field around the body that is fifty times more powerful than human brain; and that the communication between heart and brain can be significantly improved with positive emotions of love *(metta)* and appreciation *(mudita)*.[2] Meditation teaches us how to stay present with our experience as it arise without judgment and bring awareness to it. Buddhist practices on metta, tonglen and four immeasurables trains our heart-mind to remain open and generate positive emotions for the healing of pain in self and others.

The orientation of the entire Nobel Eightfold Path is Buddha's System Theory and begins and ends with 'Right View.' The order of the steps and what precedes and what follows is important to become accomplished in the path.

> *"Bhikkhus, just as the dawn is the forerunner and first indication of the rising of the sun, so is right view the forerunner and first indication of wholesome states. For one of Right View, bhikkhus, Right Intention springs up. For one of Right Intention, Right Speech springs up. For one of Right Speech, Right Action springs up. For one of Right Action, Right Livelihood springs up. For one of Right Livelihood, Right Effort springs up. For one of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness springs up. For one of Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration springs up. For one of Right Concentration, Right Knowledge springs up. For one of Right knowledge, Right Deliverance springs up.*[3]

> *"Bhikkhus, Ignorance, avijja is the forerunner of the arising of demeritorious factors; lack of moral shame, ahirika, and lack of moral dread, anottappa, are only its followers,*[1] *. Bhikkhus, one who is ignorant and lacking in wisdom would hold Incorrect View. In one who holds Unwholesome View there would arise Incorrect Thinking, one who has Unwholesome Thinking, would utter Unwholesome Speech; one who utter Incorrect Speech would take Unwholesome Action: one who takes Erroneous Action would engage in Wrong Livelihood; one who engages in Wrong Livelihood would make Unskillful Effort; one who makes Unskillful Effort would practise Unskillful Mindfulness: one who practices Unskillful Mindfulness would develop Unskillful Concentration."*[4]

There are six unsurpassable qualities of Buddha Dharma. The teachings of Buddha are i) *Svākkhāto* : "personally verified" and not speculative, ii) *Sandiṭṭhiko* : "able to be examined" and amenable to scientific scrutiny, iii) *Akaliko*: "timeless and immediate" in results and not limited by relative time, iv) *Ehipasiko*: "which you can come and see" for yourself, v) *Opanayiko*: "leading one close to" liberation and vi) *Paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*: "personally realized by the wise" and noble disciples. Knowledge or Truth of reality is superficially dual but represents a unity in deeper layers of quiet mind.

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2 Childre Doc and Martin Howard; The HeartMath Solution: The Institute of HeartMath's Revolutionary Program for Engaging the Power of the Heart's Intelligence. Harper Collins, NY :1999

3 Right View: The Sammaditthi Sutta and its Commentary; Translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli; Edited and Revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi; Anguttara Nikaya 10:121; www.accesstoinsight.org

4 Ibid; Samyutta Nikaya 35:80

Mind is said to be co-extensive with space and awareness, especially in Dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Vedic knowledge and science (Sanskrit *Vijñāna)* in ancient India gave central place to consciousness (Pali *viññāṇa*) in understanding the living universe, including human beings. In Buddha dharma, all of material worlds is made of very tiny units of Kalapas, smaller than atoms (paramanu). Kalapas may be termed as units of consciousness. These kalapas like smallest quantum particle are all in a state of perpetual change or flux and make all things in the universe. In the real world of quantum physics no elementary phenomenon, is a phenomenon until it is an observed phenomena. Observation or cognition takes place in the consciousness of the observer. All phenomena are arising together in a mutually interdependent web of cause and effect. The union of mental phenomena *(nāma)*and physical phenomena *(rūpa)*, are conditioned by nonlocal consciousness (of the observer) in the causal chain of dependent co-arising (*paticcasamuppāda).*

Reality is fluid but we are continually creating and modifying structures to hold our position to feel secure instead of allowing space for change or growth to happen naturally. Stuctural dysfunction and compounding of 'dukkha' starts with reductionist dualistic and materialistic view. The middle way is not only a way for self-awakening but can also be applied towards social awakening and transformation of cultures. Buddha envisioned this task of social transformation and enlightened society to take place through his noble disciples in the four-fold sangha (parisa) of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen practitioners. The word 'sangha' has two levels of meaning: (i) on the ideal (arya) level, it denotes all of the Buddha's followers, lay or ordained, who have at least attained the level of srotapanna; ii) on the conventional (samvtri) level, it denotes the orders of the Bhikkhus and Bhiksunis" [ref] Instead of struggling for social justice and human rights and ending war through man-made secular laws and legal institutions, Buddha dharma teaches of letting go of the struggle through personal and community study and practice of mindful living.

There are four conditions for enlightenment; i) association with the wise and noble person; ii) listening to the Dhamma; iii) 'wise consideration' of Dhamma; and iv) practicing Dhamma. (Samyutta Nikaya, Maha-vagga, Kindred Sayings on Stream-winner, Chapter I, par. 5). The study and practice of mindful living helps us gradually integrate our inner mental state with outer physical forms. If we lose our spiritual connection with all life through our mindful breath we lose our connection to earth and its elements and greater life in cosmos. Dharma based approach to knowledge can give us the deep insight (prajna) that is needed to solve large scale systemic problems in society, economy and ecology.[5] Prajna comes from continual inquiry, digging deeper with the second factor of enlightenment '*dhamma vicaya'* or investigation of dhamma.

American Historian, Daniel J. Boorstin commented*, "The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance - it is the illusion of knowledge."* If our education is such that knowledge is misaligned from reality with unwholesome world views, poor theories, wrong views and blind leaders, then society begins to destroy its habitat and local economy and finally destroys itself from within. Just like Right View, Kamma divides into two classes, the wholesome and the unwholesome. The former are actions motivated by detachment, kindness, and understanding, the latter actions motivated by greed, hatred and delusion. The first kind leads to good rebirth in happy planes of existence and the latter to rebirth in planes of misery. It is by complete understanding of *Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta*, that one is able to rid oneself of the Sankhara accumulated in one's own kamma or mindstream. The Buddha's advice to monks is that they should maintain the awareness of *Anicca, Dukkha or Anatta* in all postures throughout the day.

[5] Barua, Susmita; A Radically Creative approach to Mindful System Change; Jagojjyoti: 2555 Buddha Jayanti Centenary Vol. Bengal Buddhist Association, Calcutta: 2011

While science has marginalized the rich domain of human experience, Buddha gave primacy to direct perception and experience above all other sources of knowledge in his famous *Kalama Sutta*. His most remarkable meditative discovery is the Satipatthana (*Vipassana*), or development of the four foundation of mindfulness that leads to ultimate Knowledge and Nirvana. The Noble Eightfold Path can be visualized as the steps of a great pyramid with spiraling staircase inside the pyramid leading from each steps to the top to one pointed Samadhi of stillness. Concentration can produce laser like beam to bridge time-space and knowledge in the relative time with absolute knowing in the timeless, dropping off of the veil of duality of self and world, dukkha and samsara to the bliss and freedom of emptiness. The Middle Way is also about synchronizing our mind-body bridging the gap between the inner and outer reality as a musician tunes his instrument. Since the reality of war and peace originates in the mind and consciousness, it is there it needs to be addressed through practice, dialogue, mutual communication and participation in safe practice and learning communities. Any meaningful action or decision-making in Buddha dharma, including social action must be done with wise consideration of worldview, intention and speech.

In philosophy, the study of knowledge is called epistemology, and the philosopher Plato famously defined knowledge as "*justified true belief*". This definition was not ultimately endorsed by Plato and others. So the problem of defining knowledge in epistemology is on-going even with scientific-method of acquiring knowledge. In Judeo-Christian and Islamic tradition knowledge comes from divine source or God. In Indian philosophy highest knowledge is synonymous with direct experience of enlightenment, bodhi and ultimate liberation. Early Christian groups called *Gnostics* regarded *'gnosis'* or mystical enlightenment as spiritual knowledge. Sharing of knowledge is considered a great form of gift (dana) in all Dharmic traditions in India. In Dharma knowledge is for altruistic happiness of all living beings. In *Kalama Sutta* Buddha gives the post-modern ethics for deciding what to believe in one's search for knowledge or solving the Scientist's dilemma of 'means versus ends.'

"Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor tradition; nor rumor; nor what is in a scripture; nor surmise; nor axiom; nor specious reasoning; nor bias towards one's beliefs; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.' When you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,' enter on and abide in them."[6]

Studies have shown human brain has unlimited capacity to learn and remains infinitely plastic and malleable even in grownups. Modern Cognitive Science is an interdisciplinary study of human mind, but tend to heavily rely on artificial intelligence. Both Buddha Dharma and Science encourages impartial investigation of nature and can come together in the spirit of right knowledge and understanding for the benefit of all beings. Buddha's discovery of the Middle Way to Knowledge (transcedent awareness) has the potential to uplift the entire state of human civilization from its current confused and conflicted state by awakening the natural capacities of human heart and human brain within a few, if not one generation. *"Be a light and refuge unto yourselves"*. This was Buddha final teaching.

[6] Kalama Sutta: To The Kalamas; Anguttara Nikaya 3.65

Being Buddhist in New Lands[1]: Mapping Buddhist Social-Cultural Identities

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Expansion of Buddhism to the West, to predominantly Christian countries, represents in many cases the adoption and practice of the Dharma as adults. Entering into this peculiar belief and practice system implies a new set of combinations in people's systems of meanings and practices.

In this paper we analyze the process of being Buddhist in a Catholic country (new land) by way of looking at the interrelation structure between the systems of meaning and of practices in a western Buddhist lay sangha. Being Buddhist is seen here as a type of balance in the duality meanings and practices on the road to happiness. This paper also attempts to see how the duality relates to happiness.

The duality of meanings and practices is an artificial construction used to code and better understand the structure and dynamics of social fields (Mohr). It is a duality without independent existences built with the purpose to comprehend and visualize the dynamic interrelation between the system of relations among meanings with the system of relations among practices.

Interrelations between the systems (or cosmologies of meanings and practices) result in identity traits (as if they were DNA combinations) which together shape what we could define as the Buddhist "identity" (being) of Sakya Tashi Ling lay-sangha. This social-cultural DNA is the combinations of the structure of the social dimensions of meanings and practices. Those "artificially independent" social dimensions are representations (maps) of the meanings and practices social cosmologies.

The map of the meanings' cosmology is the practitioners referential social space of values and visions. It represents their Buddhist way of feeling and seeing. The map of the cosmology of practices shows the form taken by their Buddhist practice, that is to say the way they do Buddhism. We could also think about Buddhism as a toolbox containing sets of meanings which are combined with practices yielding differentiated Buddhist identities.

In this paper I show and analyze the configuration of such Buddhist identity (being) and its relation to happiness in a community of western practitioners.

FROM: The theoretical framework rests on the contribution of Mohr (1994, 1997), Breiger (1974, 2000), and Bourdieu (1977, 1985) to the concept of duality. Builds upon the duality dimension approach seeing the world articulated in a world of symbols and meanings and the world of practices (Bourdieu's social and cultural fields; Breiger's duality, and Mohr's block-modeling the duality).

[1] First Run on an idea of the ongoing research adventure Balance and Happiness of JA Rodríguez and John Mohr (University of California, Santa Barbara). First Run idea result of Sea Ranch's research meeting of June 2011.

[2] **Acknowledgements:** This paper has benefited from the help of Joanne M. Vitello and Ven. Lama Dorje Dondrub. It is based on research funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (COS2010-21761).

It is based on Bourdieus's practice theory where "material world (the world of action) and the cultural world (the world of symbols) interpenetrate and are built through the immediate association of each with the other (quoted in Mohr and Duquenne, 1997: 309). Further discussion can be found in Mohr (2008).

TO: The goal is the identification of social DNA resulting in Buddhist identities by means of maps (representations of the social-cultural DNA). The interconcection between the social structure of meanings and the social structure of practices produces social-cultural DNA.

HOW: We use data from a recent sociological survey of the lay sangha from Sakya Tashi Ling (Barcelona, Spain) Tibetan monastery. We use Wave 1[3] with a subsample of variables and a subsample of cases (those answering also in Wave 2). With the data we build a proximity matrix (in this case of significant correlations) among the variables representing meanings and practices. The proximity matrix is used to generate relational visions:

a. Dimension of meanings and visions: it represents their positioning in the Buddhist value cosmology.
b. Dimension of practices: it represents their positioning in the Buddhist practice's system.
c. Interconnection (DNA): this is the space where the identity is created as a result of combinations between the system of meanings and the system of practices.
d. The entire Buddhist social-cultural field as the addition of all the parts

Network analysis[4] enables us to treat the existence of relation among meanings and practices, derived from the proximity analysis, as channels of communication, interaction and combination among them. Relations (lines) point to links (correlations) among nodes producing a communication system that creates combinations of meanings and practices as social identities. Here the linking networks (duality networks) are channels where elements are mixed and recombined shaping something.

The duality network identified shows a system of communication coupling symbolic representations of the world with forms of practice. We understand the Buddhist identity as the results of such coupling process. The graphs used are maps of the cultural field where meanings and practices are combined creating social identity.

DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS:

In this first test run we have selected 40 variables representing meanings (ways of seeing and valuing existence and Buddhism) and practices. They are part of the Buddhist toolbox and their combinations result in differentiated ways of being and doing. In this run we have included happiness and wellbeing variables in order to analyze its crimping/interlace with the identity structure.

[3] Survey to the STL's followers "Buddhism, values, religiosity and spirituality" (*Budismo, valores, religiosidad y espiritualidad*) carried out at the end of 2008. Universe: 150 people of the Buddhist Philosophy Study Program. Number of responses: 93 (62% of the universe)

[4] The analysis of social networks centers on the relations between the actors, and from these relations social structures are derived where social dynamics, marginalization, power, etc. are analyzed. The Social Networks Analysis is useful for studying the processes of cohesion, creation of groups, identity and articulation of collective action. Wasserman and Faust,1994; Rodríguez, 2005).

The proximity matrix derived from the data embodies the relational structures shaping both the independent cosmologies of meaning and practices and also, as result of their interaction, a Buddhist (social-cultural) identity.

This is a story based on graphics/maps. They are the way to analyze and display (and represent) the complex system of interrelations producing the social-cultural identity of this group of practitioners.

DUALITY STORIES

The way used to look at the issue and to search for answers conveys different, although complementary, stories resulting in a powerful explanatory system. In some stories we focus on the key role played by the interlace between the meanings and practices systems/cosmologies. On another we emphasize and visualize the transition from a connected to a broken structure. And on another we identify social roles within the identitary system:

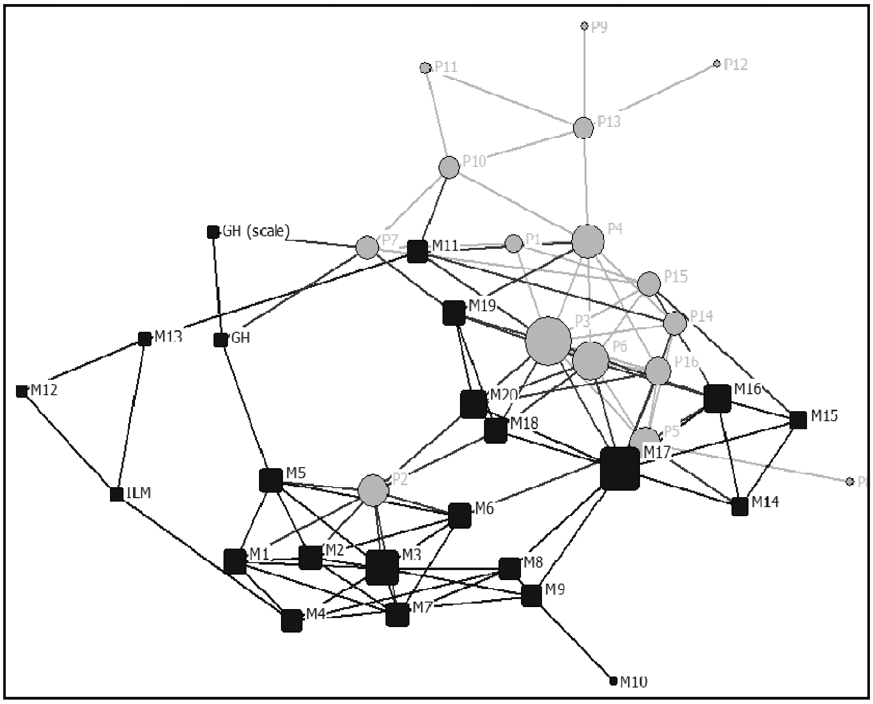
a. Analysis and visualization of the entire structure of relations depicting the Buddhist identity of this group. In the process of looking for the “heart of the system” (the subset of very strong relations) we move from a weak structure (albeit joined together) to a strong structure (although broken).
b. Focus on the structures of the meaning and practices’ dimensions and on the backbone, which connects both dimensions.
c. Analysis of the social roles generated by the interrelational system, via block-modeling.

STORY A

Graph/Map1 represents the entire relational structure. The (“identity) body” is made up of two large social areas connected by bridges. The larger and more central area on the right concentrates practices (nodes in green) and the relations among themselves (lines also in green). This area is also dominated by the inter-dimensions (of meanings and practices) relations (lines in red). The center of the sub-structure turns around prominent practices (P3 mantras, P6 retreats) and meanings (M17: practicing helps inner peace and happiness).

The left smaller (and lower) area is made up of meanings (nodes in blue) connected among themselves (lines in blue) and to a single large practice (P2 meditation). The most central (larger nodes) meanings in the area evidence the appeal of the STL project as a new path (M3) that breaks with conventionalism (M2).

MAP 1 - The complete system: B's identity system

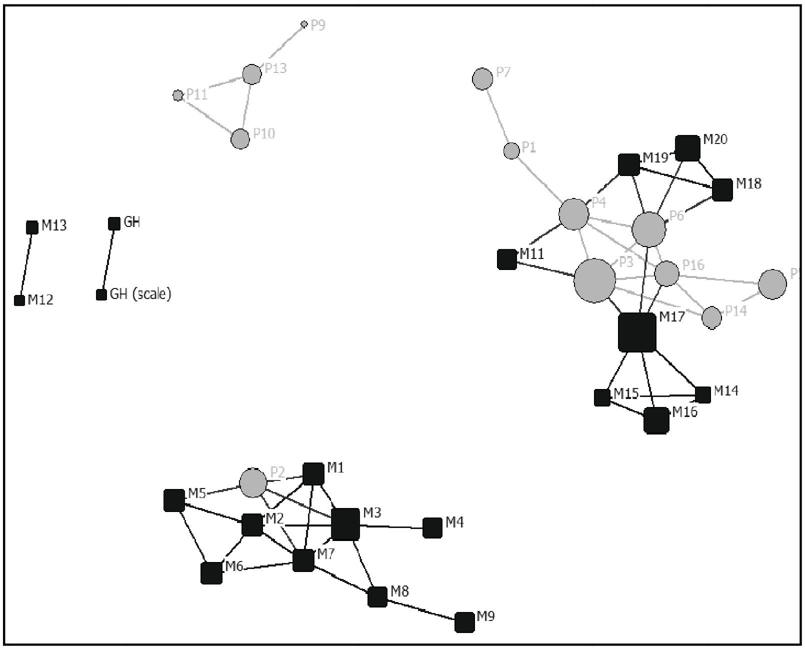


Lines in red show the very relevant connections between meanings and practices. The size of the lines indicate the strength of the relations and point to the different roles played by them. Weak relations maintain the system connected. Strong relations act as the heart of the system. The size of nodes portray the importance, centrality, prominence of meanings and practices. (See List of meanings and practices in Appendix 1)

We attempt to arrive at the heart of the system by selecting stronger relations (higher correlation levels: Larger than (GT) 40, and Larger than 50) (Map 2 and Map 3). The first result of the increase in relational strength is the rupture of the system into smaller pieces. This calls our attention to the key relevance of the so-called "weak" relations. They represent the power/might of the system to ensure its unity.

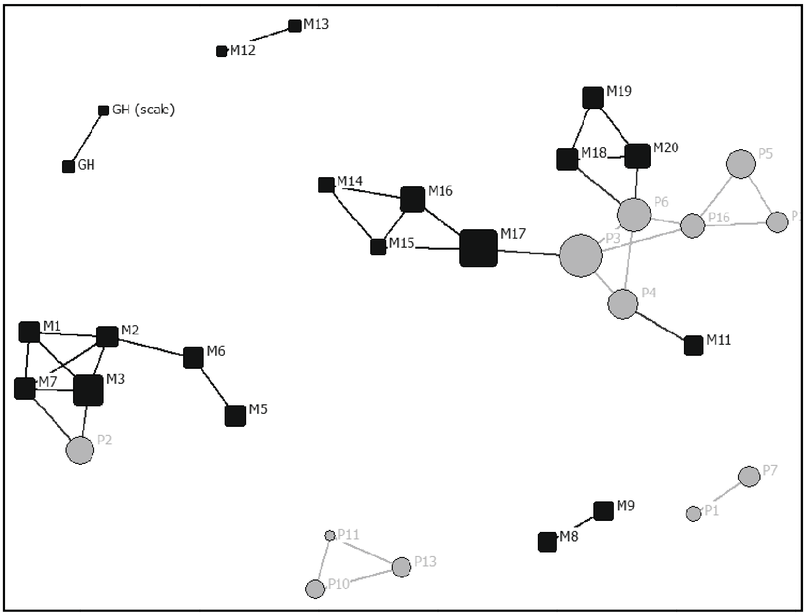
The fractioning of the structure represented in Map 2 and Map 3 point to two parts (valves) of this heart. A larger one on the right with the most central practices and meanings (P3 mantras, P6 retreats, M17: practicing helps inner peace and happiness) interconnected. The left valve is a smaller network of meanings (representing new path, breaking with conventionalism and building community) connected to a central practice (P2 meditation).

MAP 2 - Stronger relations: GT 40



It is worth mentioning the survival of two very small structures as part of this core structure; one linking meanings of happiness and wellbeing, and another connecting practices involving the monastery (rituals, empowerments, teachings, guide).

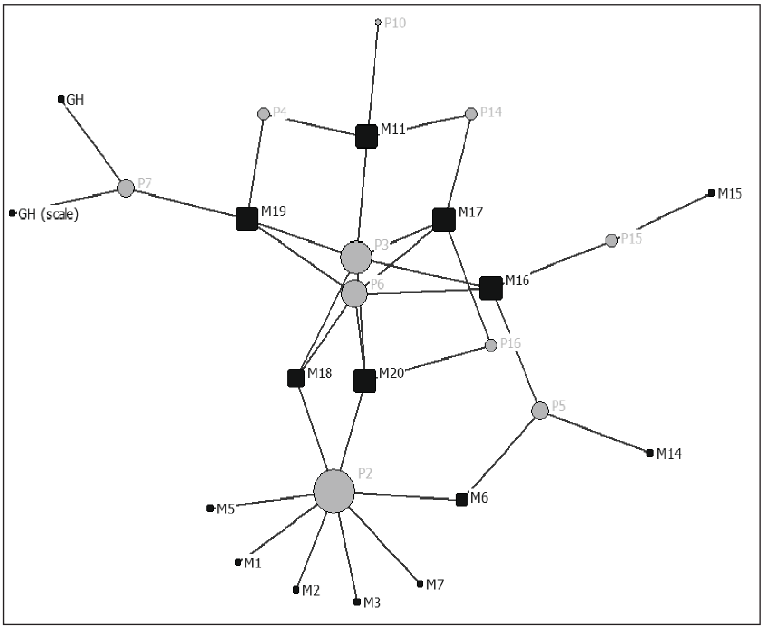
MAP 3 - The Heart of the System: GT 50



STORY B

The detailed study of structure represented in Map 4 (the connecting structure) offers several stories depending on the type of combination we focus on.

MAP 4 - The Connecting Structure



The connecting structure is the backbone/ skeleton of the entire system (the link between meanings and practices). It supports and feeds the system of relations making up the entire body.

It is a structure with a form resembling a body (skeleton) with a sort of head, body, base and arms (mind, heart, action). The structure on top, the so-called head, revolves around the importance given to the institution (the monastery: M11). It kind of denotes the guiding role played by the institution and the relevance of the institutional practices (empowerments, volunteer work) integrating the followers into the institutional project.

The largest structure in the center is composed of two large-substructures resembling the main body/trunk and the base/legs. They are connected by relational meanings (belief that practice leads to new and valuable friendships and acquaintances).

In the very center (it resembles the heart) we find mantras and retreats. Arms towards happiness, and beliefs in nirvana and in life after death emerge from it.

The base is centralized in the practice of meditation (P3). The link between meditation and meanings (such as Buddhism as a new path, as a way to solve problems, and as a way to create community) creates the base of the skeleton, the linkage to the ground through meanings.

These lines of combinations of elements are like narrative/causal lines resembling arms toward the outside (happiness, beliefs in nirvana and in life after death, and community).

Other combinations connect, through the "heart", happiness (at the end of the right arm) with the left arms (nirvana, life after death). Believing in reincarnation is key allowing for the extension of the left arms through such practices as attendance of religious services (p15) and taking refuge (P5).

Another sets of combinations would link head, body and base. From meditation as the base, through the practices of mantras and retreats, towards the head position where the importance given to the Monastery resides.

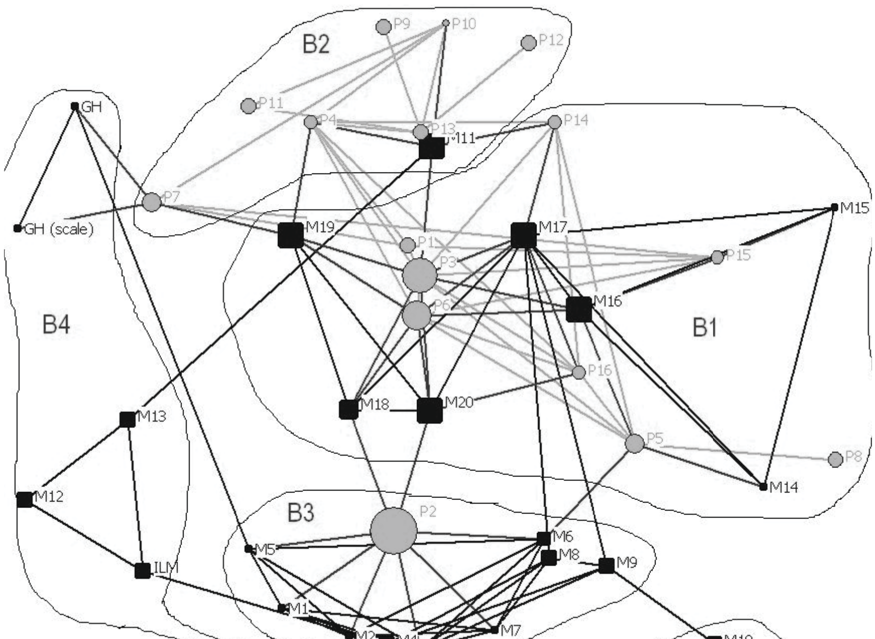
These combinations are communication roads, a type of highways full of traffic in both directions. The existence of connecting flows activate combinations of practice and meaning elements which end producing specific ways of perceiving and acting in the world.

STORY C

In the image of the complete system (Map 5) we can identify the four large blocks resulting from the application of the Concor algorithm to obtain structural equivalent social positions (White, Boorman, Breiger, 1976). Concor identifies (in two splits) four main blocks representing different combinations of Buddhist DNA (that is to say of meanings and practices) in a solution with R^2 = 0.271. (See Blocked matrix and cluster diagram in Appendix 2)

Block 4: Grand life value system. It is made up by happiness, satisfaction with life and values regarding the importance of Buddhism and spirituality in their lives. It represents the conceptual (meaning) reference frame embracing (partially) the main body of the social identity structure. It is the value and meaning position before life.

MAP 5 – Block-modeling The Complete System



Block 3 represents the large base, as well as entrance door, to the entire system. It is formed by the assessments/reasons to be on the Buddhist path in combination with the main practice in this path: Meditation. Meditation as base practice connects those “worldly” values with Buddhism as a system of specialized (sacred/religious) meanings and practices.

STL Buddhist model appeals precisely by connecting specialized Buddhism with those “worldly” values. Along with meditation, and thank to its centrality, it facilitates the opening of a new vital road, toward happiness, which breaks with conventionality (of the dominant value system of the Catholic society surrounding them), in a spiritual approach, and by means of creating and belonging to a new community.

The Buddhist identity structure of the STL lay shanga rests upon these foundations of practices and meanings.

Block 2 represents the institutionalization of Buddhist practice through the Monastery. The monastery appears as the representation of the Buddhist practice, as the social space that facilitates the performing and being Buddhist. The social-cultural space of the monastery hosts, and is also the result of, institutional practices (rituals, empowerments), spirituality space, interrrelational space (with masters, monks, peers), and a space of creation of community. It is the linking space to the religious, sacred, spiritual spheres. Collective practice produces identification with the local sangha as well as with Buddhism as a global entity. The monastery acts as a door towards, as crimp to, Buddhism as a body of knowledge, philosophy, religion and global community of identity and practice.

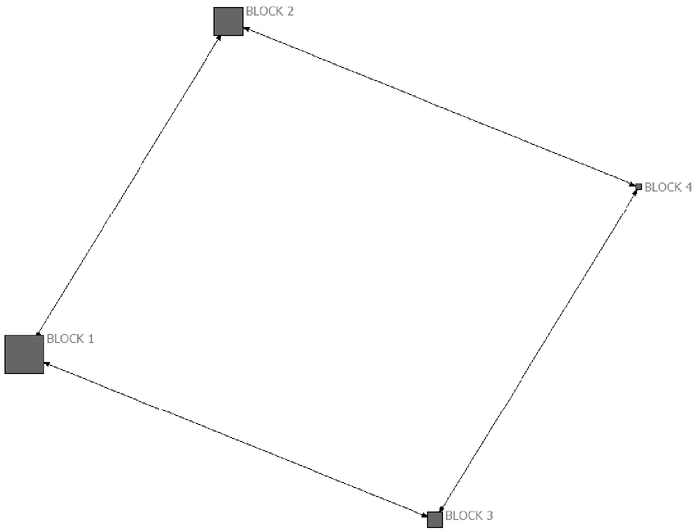
Block 1 is the fundamental space of interrelation between meanings and practices. It is quite similar to the interconnector skeleton creator of social-cultural DNA seen before. It represents the value and practice essence of their Buddhism. We can find there the ultimate essence vision composed by the belief in nirvana, in life after death and in resurrection. They represent the view of the essence of Buddhism, of the wheel of life. Along we can find the ritualistic practices used in the path: rituals, mantras, refuge, retreats, pilgrimage, and attendance of religious services. They represent the essence of Buddhist religious practice.

Linked to the meaning and practice essence we find the existential functionality of the path. The path (their vision and practice) leads to inner peace and happiness, provides comfort against suffering, and lets people find the community with which to share the journey.

Here it is worth highlighting the importance of creating social relations (friends, like people, community) as part of the journey. STL’s open and socially oriented project and model, seen through its lay sangha, rests upon, as fundamental axes, the creation and existence of a community network (formed by the lay sangha) solidified by a collective practice towards society. This model stresses the social and collective dimensions of Buddhism.

The relations among the four main blocks (derived from the density block matrix generated by Concor) is represented in Map 6. The relational structure forms a perfect square where all four blocks are connected and there is no center. Each is connected directly with its two neighbors blocks and indirectly to the other. This system or relations (combining direct and indirect relations) reflects a different pattern of influences and combinations. For example: the grand life value system (block 4) easily combines with meditation and the base of the system (Block 3) and the institutionalization of practices (Block 2) but indirectly with the core creator of identity (Block 1).

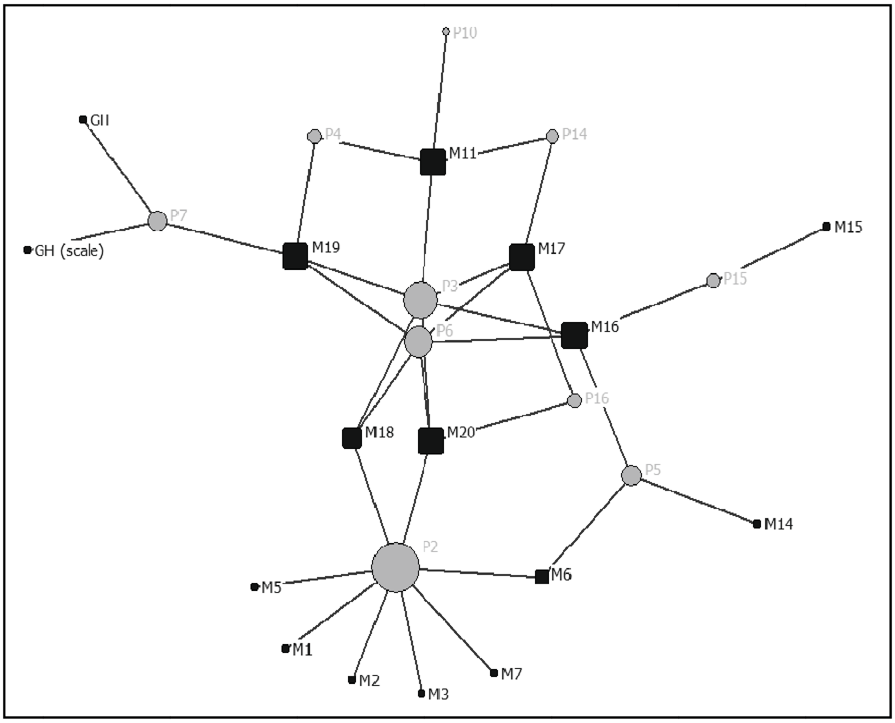
MAP 6 - Network of Blocks



As Conclusions

The careful study of the skeleton type connecting structure (Map7) lets us identify a few very interesting narrative/causal lines combining meanings (M) and practices (P):

MAP 7 - The Connecting Structure: Skeleton



Happiness (and leading to happiness). Happiness (M) is one end part of the communication line formed by group practice (P) followed by comfort when suffering (M) and mantras and retreats (Ps). Leading to happiness (M) is linked to mantras and retreats (Ps) along with volunteer work (P).

Nirvana (M) is linked to reincarnation (M) through attendance to religious services (P). Thanks to reincarnation it (nirvana) is connected to mantras and retreats.

Believing in life after death (M) is linked directly to taking refuge (P) and indirectly through reincarnation (M) to mantras/retreats (Ps) and through belonging to community (M) to meditation (P).

Importance of the monastery (M). Mantras/retreats (Ps) along with empowerments and volunteer work (Ps) are connected to the monastery shaping it as institutional space.

In brief, this skeleton type connecting structure summarizes the power of the interconnections between visions (finalist meanings) and causal forces (practices) creating Buddhist identities, so acting as sort of DNA. This structure is the backbone forming the being Buddhist (as combination of meanings and practices). Happiness is located on the top left part of the map with indirect link to the "head" incarnating the monastery. Beliefs in nirvana and life after death emerge from the central part of the structure and from the connection between the central part (heart) and the base (action).

OM, AH, HUM.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEANINGS AND PRACTICES

P1 Practice of rituals
P2 Practice of meditation
P3 Mantras
P4 Initiations
P5 Taken refuge
P6 Retreat
P7 Group of practice
P8 Pilgrimage
P9 Monastery for spirituality
P10 Monastery for initiations
P11 Monastery for meetings lamas
P12 Monastery for asking for help
P13 Monastery for rituals
P14 Monastery for volunteering
P15 attendance religious services B
P16 Volunteer participation

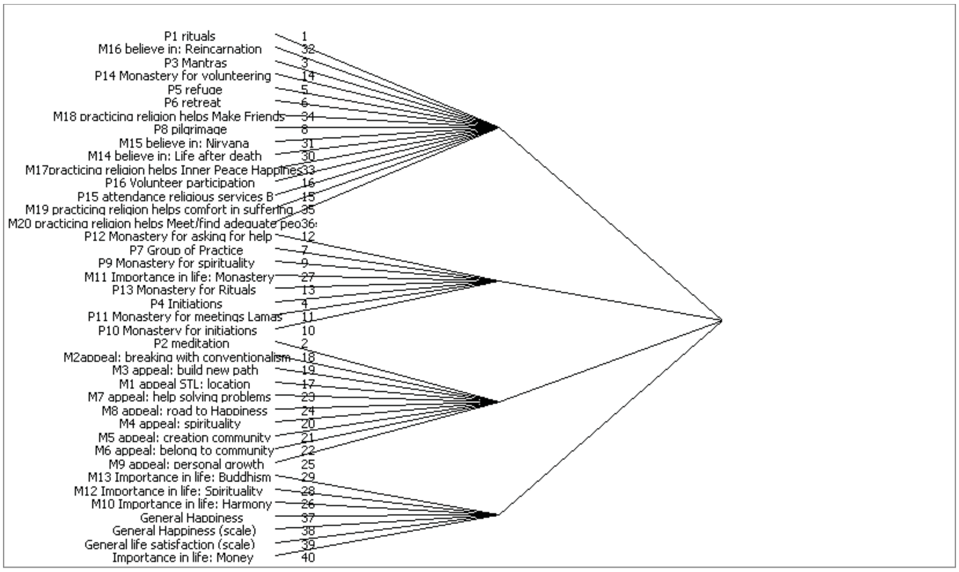
M1 Appeal STL: location
M2 appeal: breaking with conventionalism
M3 appeal: build new path
M4 appeal: spirituality
M5 appeal: creation community
M6 appeal: belong to community
M7 appeal: help solving problems
M8 appeal: road to happiness
M9 appeal: personal growth
M10 Importance in life: Harmony
M11 Importance in life: Monastery
M12 Importance in life: Spirituality
M13 Importance in life: Buddhism
M14 believe in: Life after death
M15 believe in: Nirvana
M16 believe in: Reincarnation
M17practicing religion helps inner peace happiness
M18 practicing religion helps make friends
M19 practicing religion helps comfort in suffering
M20 practicing religion helps meet/find alike people
General Happiness
General Happiness (scale)
General life satisfaction (scale)
Importance in life: Money

APPENDIX 2

BLOKED MATRIX

	1P	32M	3P	14P	5P	6P	34M	8P	31M	30M	33M	16P	15P	35M	36M	12P	7P	9P	27M	13P	4P	11P	10P	2P	18M	19M	17M	23M	24M	20M	21M	22M	25M	29M	28M	26M	37G	38G	39G	40I
P1			1										1				1				1																			
M16			1		1	1			1	1	1		1																											
P3	1	1		1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1				1		1																			
P14			1		1						1	1							1		1																			
P5		1	1	1		1		1		1		1																				1								
P6		1	1		1		1				1	1	1	1	1						1																			
M18			1			1					1			1	1									1																
P8					1																																			
M15		1								1	1		1																											
M14		1			1				1		1																													
M17		1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1			1														1				1							
P16			1	1	1	1					1				1						1																			
P15	1	1	1			1			1								1																							
M19			1			1	1								1		1				1																			
M20			1			1	1				1	1		1										1																
P12																				1																				
P7	1												1	1									1														1	1		
P9																				1																				
M11			1	1																	1		1											1						
P13																1		1			1	1	1																	
P4	1		1	1		1						1		1					1	1			1																	
P11																				1			1																	
P10																	1		1	1	1	1																		
P2							1								1										1	1	1	1			1	1								
M2																								1		1	1	1			1	1								
M3																								1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
M1																								1	1	1		1		1	1									
M7																								1	1	1	1		1			1								
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M4																										1	1		1				1							1
M5																								1	1	1	1					1					1			
M6					1																			1	1	1		1			1									
M9											1															1			1	1						1				
M13																			1																1					1
M12																																		1						1
M10																																	1							
GH																	1														1							1		
GH (scale)																	1																				1			
GLS (scale)																																								
ILM																													1				1	1						

CLUSTER DIAGRAM



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Buddhism and "Situationists" on Character and the Virtues

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John Gay wrote the following lines, in the eighteenth-century:

> *Give me, kind Heaven, a private station,*
> *A mind serene for contemplation*

The picture that these lines might well (very well) evoke — of the lonely meditator on his mountain-top — is contrary to what will now be presented. My remarks deal with quite another aspect — the *social* aspect — of contemplation and meditation in early Buddhism. The conclusion will be that early Buddhist meditation is, at one and the same time, both *private and public* in scope. The meditator comes down from his mountain and lives in the community. Or to put it another way: those living in the community can derive from meditation (in Buddhist theory) a *social* benefit. This benefit is likely to be validated by scientific experiment, and by experimental psychology in particular, for reasons I will explain.

Buddhist meditation is also likely to help solve a problem in present-day philosophy, for it is the case both that Buddhism is relevant to the problem *and* — what is just as important — philosophers have failed, predictably or otherwise, to notice that this is so. This makes it all the more crucial that the Buddhist view is represented. And there is, besides, a bonus to be had from a Buddhist solution to the philosophical problem in question. The bonus is this: the philosophical solution will help us to get closer (if not all the way) to answering a question that has long troubled scholars: *what is Buddhist ethics*?

Western philosophers often think of ethics as being about *doing the right thing* by — that is to say *for* — other people. It is less frequently accepted that ethics is about transforming all of one's life, not just one's relations with others. But things are changing, and western philosophers are coming around to the possibility that doing the right thing by others, and doing the right thing for oneself, might be more closely linked than has often been supposed. Right at the start of the western philosophical tradition, Aristotle was clear about the link,[1] and philosophers are returning to it now. Indeed, as the philosopher Owen Flanagan wrote, not that long ago:

> It is common for philosophers to conceive of morality as a mechanism for resolving interpersonal conflicts ... [but] ... The trouble with conceiving of morality as exclusively concerned with conflict resolution, social harmony, and the protection of rights is that it ignores the fact that in many cultures, including our own [western] culture, *what we call morality also sets out a conception of a good person, of mature individual personality, and of a good life.....* which is not entirely concerned with social relations.[2]

The vitally important, *other* aspect of ethics in the West, *aside from social relations* — if we look back at our own long tradition of philosophical reflection, starting with Aristotle and Plato—

1 See the great insights, regarding this point, of MacIntyre (1996, esp. 52ff.).
2 Flanagan (1993: 17), *emphasis added.*

is something we might call (as Flanagan terms it) the 'intrapersonal' aspect. Now this term, which is important for the rest of what I have to say, means something like *what is going on inside us,* in contrast to *what is going on between me,* or *between us, and other people.*

Is Buddhist ethics fundamentally about what goes on inside the individual, or about what goes on between individuals? I want to say that it is both, and that meditation, likewise, is about the interpersonal *and* the intrapersonal.

How can we determine that this is, in fact, the case? I want to suggest that one of the best ways of revealing the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of both Buddhist ethics and Buddhist meditation is by considering a practical test case. I have chosen for these purposes the Good Samaritan parable from the Bible, and I have done so for two reasons. Firstly, because it has a direct equivalent in a Buddhist story. Secondly, because it sets up the philosophical problem, to which I propose to offer a Buddhist solution.

Let us start, then, with the Buddhist sutta in which a situation is presented which is remarkably like the situation of the Good Samaritan. In the *Āghatapaṭivinaya Sutta*, it is written:

> Just as when there is a sick man — in pain, seriously ill — traveling along a road, far from the next village & far from the last, unable to get the food he needs, unable to get the medicine he needs, unable to get a suitable assistant, unable to get anyone to take him to human habitation. Now suppose another person were to see him coming along the road. He would do what he could out of compassion, pity, & sympathy for the man, thinking, 'O that this man should get the food he needs, the medicine he needs, a suitable assistant, someone to take him to human habitation.[3]

Now those who remember the context of this sutta, will remember that the sutta is about how to handle, by means of meditation, the experience of meeting with a range of different kinds of persons. Meditation is, then, interpersonal, for — as presented in this sutta at least — it *concerns relations with others*. And yet, at the same time, meditation is always *intra*personal: its practices *internally regulate* the activities of the mind and it can only be practised, in an important sense, *alone*.

So much, it seems, is clear. But I think we can be much more specific — because Buddhist theory is more specific — about how the two domains, the inner and outer, the intrapersonal and interpersonal, come together. In order to do this, I will introduce the philosophical problem to which, as I have suggested, Buddhism likely has the answer. By setting Buddhist practice in high relief against the background of this problem, we can hope to learn something about Buddhism, as well as philosophy, and about human life in general.

The philosophical problem is based on the story of the Good Samaritan in the Bible. As a reminder then, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells the following story:

> 30 .... "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other

[3] A iii 186ff. [PTS edition]; translated by Thanissaro: http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an05/an05.162.than.html (accessed Dec. 10, 2011).

> side. 33 But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."[4]

The philosophical problem is as follows. *Ordinarily*, we suppose that a person who has a helpful character will act like the Good Samaritan. If a helpful person sees somebody suffering by the side of their path or road, they will promptly stop to help. It should not matter too much if one is in a slight hurry. The point of the virtue of helpfulness — and having, as we say, a helpful character — is that you will know when help is required of you. Not only will you know that, but if you are a helpful person, you will of course actually stop to offer to lend a hand. In both the Buddhist scripture and the Christian scripture, the moral requirement to help is made very clear, in the situation described by the Bible as in the sutta. When you see somebody ill and in pain, and you are the only person within miles, you need to stop and help. To do any less would be, as is often said, *un*ethical.

The moral picture just given is often equated, in English-language moral tradition, with the concept of 'character'. The person of good Character will stop and help. The person who is, or has, a bad Character will not help. In particular, we often say that good Character is made up of a number of moral traits: kindness, helpfulness, tolerance and so on. The development of these traits, the causing of their coming-to-be — in Buddhist terms *bhāvanā* — is a vital, indeed it is a *fundamental* aspect of the moral life. It is no surprise then that religious traditions, as well as an increasing number of secular programmes,[5] have as their objective 'character development' and the development of specific moral traits, which are often known as 'the virtues'.

So far so good. But what if the traditional story about Character is a piece of nonsense? A group of philosophers, who call themselves 'situationists', claim to have revealed that Character and Character traits are insufficiently supported by scientific evidence. Therefore we should abandon them as moral concepts. Furthermore, any tradition (including religious tradition) that talks about developing the virtues, must be doing so on inadequate empirical evidence. Rather, situationists claim, the empirical data points entirely, and dramatically, the other way: there is very likely no such thing as Character, no such things as Character traits, no such thing as Virtue (with a capital V) or virtues in general.[6]

I accept that I am stereotyping the argument. Situationist philosophers are not in complete agreement[7] with each other, but a key point they do agree about, and which serves to structure their argument is the following. We should — the situationists tell us — pay more attention to the *background situation* of any person facing a moral dilemma, and we should pay rather less attention to *individual personality*, even though the latter is a major focus of many moral traditions.[8] For it

4 Luke 10: 30-37, *New American Standard Bible*.

5 The proliferation of such programmes, and the theory that supports them, is noted with disapproval by Doris (2002: ix, 121ff.).

6 See Harman (1999, esp. 316; 2000; 2003; 2009), Doris (2002), Doris and Stich (2007).

7 Compare Harman (2000: 224) with the more measured conclusions of Doris (2002).

8 Compare n.1 above.

turns out — we are told[9] — that situation influences action much more than character influences it. Situation, indeed, is an *ever*-present influence on moral action, while character is undetectable at best. How this is so — according to the situationist philosophers John Doris, Gilbert Harman and Stephen Stich — emerges clearly from an experiment to investigate Good Samaritan-type behavior.[10]

Darley and Batson (1973)

In this experiment,[11] the researchers tested whether *thinking intensively* about the story of the Good Samaritan would affect, or not, the likelihood of experimental subjects helping someone who was in distress.

The way that this was to be tested was as follows. The individual members of a group of seminary students (students preparing for Christian ministry) were assigned randomly to one of two experimental groups. One group was told to prepare a talk on the Good Samaritan, the other to prepare a talk on the subject of careers for seminary students.

Once the talk-preparation was completed, the subjects of the experiment were asked to proceed to a second building, where they would have to give their talk. However, as each subject made their way, to the second building, they would come across a person lying groaning a few metres from their route. This person was an actor playing the part of someone ill. The question behind the experiment was whether or not each seminarian would stop to help this person who was apparently ill.

A variable was introduced, and this was that when each subject (each seminarian) was about to leave the first building and move on to the second, they were told either that (1) they were very short of time to reach building two, or alternatively (2) they were on time, or thirdly that (3) there was a large amount of time before they were expected at the next venue, where they would give their talk.

The results were striking. The only factor that made any statistically significant difference was the degree to which each subject felt in a hurry. Helping varied in proportion to the level of hurry felt. But it made absolutely no difference, in respect of helping the sick person, whether the subject had been thinking intensively about (and preparing to talk about) the story of the Good Samaritan. Here are the detailed r

	High Amount of Hurry	**Medium Amount of Hurry**	**Not in a Hurry**
Helped	10%	45%	63%
Did Not Help	90%	55%	37%

[9] See esp. Harman (1999).

[10] The experiment by Darley and Batson (1973) is discussed by the situationists Gilbert Harman (1999: 323ff.) and John Doris (2002: 33ff.).

[11] See Darley and Batson (1973).

I shall review[12] just the philosophical conundrum that thinking intensively about, and preparing to talk on. the story of the Good Samaritan does not seem to help people act more like him. It is a conundrum which, as I shall shortly explain, Buddhism can hope to, and help to, solve.

The Situationists conclude that, in the light of the above-reported data, the only factor that made any difference to whether a person helped or not was the level of personal hurriedness they were feeling.[13] And, equally, no other factor is making any kind of detectable difference. Among those things which we might expect to make a difference here, but which turn out not to make any difference, is immersing oneself imaginatively in the story of the Good Samaritan. A major worry of the situationists is therefore as follows. If paying attention to edifying stories such as the Good Samaritan makes no practical difference when it comes to actually helping someone else in distress, then perhaps we emphasise such stories too much in our moral life and in our traditions and even in our religions.[14]

There is, then, a particular difficulty for traditional religious morality at the heart of these findings, and it goes as follows. While comparative ethicists, and students of Buddhism[15] have argued for the central importance of stories of various kinds within Buddhist ethics, it now seems that faith in the effect of stories might be misplaced. The amount of trust a moral tradition (any moral tradition) places in the edifying powers of narrative is — on the situationist perspective — likely to lead to confusion *if they are seen as drawing their strength and relevance from our ability to develop character traits in response to them*. It is not our character-based response to stories that gets us acting morally, but rather (all too often) the mere influence of our surrounding environment directs our actions. Grasp that, and you have — to paraphrase the great Evelyn Waugh — the very root of the matter that is morality.

If the situationists are right, then, the character aspect of the *link between stories and moral action is tenuous* and seems to be under some empirical threat. The threat — make no mistake — applies as much to the Christian context as the Buddhist. What difference can years of sermon-giving and sermon-listening possibly have made if the situationist results are an accurate indicator of people's receptivity to the moral message at the heart of scriptural stories?

I want to suggest that from the perspective of Buddhist moral psychology, possibly from a Christian perspective and the perspective of other religions also, something crucial is missing from the experiment as described. What that might be emerges from the Buddhist narrative about the Good Samaritan's dilemma, when we look at the Buddhist version more closely. Once we have uncovered what the experimenters have missed, it puts the philosophical argument on a different footing.

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[12] There is much philosophical debate about what all this evidence means regarding character and the virtues. Much of this literature links with the debate in experimental psychology about altruism, as well as the general stability of traits (including moral traits). To survey this literature — both philosophical and psychological — is beyond the scope of the current investigation. See Doris (2002, esp. 30-61) for the most thorough survey to date.

[13] Harman (1999: 324), Doris (2002: 34).

[14] For a particularly interesting discussion of narrative, see Doris (2002: 125-6).

[15] Tirrell (1990, 119) with Hallisey and Hansen (1996, 314-6). See esp. the latter, p. 316: 'narrative prefigures moral life because it cultivates a capacity of imagination that is essential for ethical action.' Tirrell, meanwhile, avers that 'Through telling and listening to stories, we learn to make subtle and not so subtle shifts in point of view, and these shifts are crucial to developing the sense of self and others so necessary to moral agency.' (1990: 119). Doris (2002: 126) would not necessarily disagree.

A key point from the perspective of Buddhist moral psychology is this. How you feel *before* you go into a situation like that of the experiment described, can be expected to make much difference. The French Tibetan monk Matthieu Ricard brings this out well. Ricard is, in fact, the Buddhist writer who has paid the most attention to situationist-type data such as we have been discussing. As he observes:

> It has been shown... that people who have experienced a happy event in the past hour are more inclined than others to come to the assistance of others.[16]

And this seems to be true, based on other experiments.[17] Generally, 'Good moods... facilitate prosocial behavior.'[18] What is the moral significance of this phenomenon? I believe its significance has been underreported (by philosophical situationists) regarding its possible connection with ancient traditions of virtue development such as Buddhism, and the understanding of the practical mechanics of moral action that goes with such traditions.

For Buddhists, the point is not only that mood and emotion influence good behavior (as Ricard has observed). Most importantly, for Buddhists, systematic training in the production of morally beneficial emotion is a cornerstone of the path of practice. Ricard again:

> the sense of belonging has considerable bearing on the manifestation of altruism. People are much more inclined to come to the assistance of their friends or of someone with whom they have something in common — ethnicity, nationality, religion, opinion — than to help a stranger to whom they feel no particular connection.[19]

And yet, it is a key fact from a Buddhist perspective that such a feeling of connection can be grown: 'The Buddhist approach is to gradually extend that sense of belonging to all beings. To that end, it is essential to understand at the most fundamental level that all living creatures share our desire to avoid suffering and experience well-being.'[20]

Three points must be considered to have clearly emerged by now. In the first place, the emotional state of a person going into a morally crucial situation, where they will have to act one way or another, *is generally agreed* — by psychologists and Buddhists alike — to have consequences for the action that person will take. This observation does not deny that situational factors have relevance. Rather, the point is that how we process the information we receive from our environment is intimately related to our state of mind. This much is agreed, as I have stated, by the psychologists whose experiments furnish the Situationist philosophers with their arguments. It is, however, on occasion ignored by those philosophers.[21] Meanwhile, traditional Buddhist moral

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[16] Ricard (2007: 203)

[17] A study by Isen, Clark and Schwartz (1976) examined 'the influence of moods or emotional states on behavior.' Since the behavior in question was that of 'helping behavior' Isen et al.'s conclusions are highly relevant to our present discussion. Isen and her co-experimenters concluded, based on a number of experiments, that 'good mood state [which] has been induced in a variety of ways ... has been shown by more than one investigator to lead to helping in a variety of situations' (1976: 385). To put the matter still more precisely, good mood causes helping directly, even after other potential contributory factors have been taken into account for. *(Ibid.)*

[18] Doris (2002: 30).

[19] Ricard (2007: 203).

[20] Ricard (2007: 203).

[21] The principal statements on situationism of Harman contain no reference to the relevant phenomenon: see, for instance, Harman (1999).

psychology finds a place for such an analysis, of the role of emotion in moral action, as the comments of Matthieu Ricard reveal.

The second key point is that the emotions which play a role in getting us to act well or not so well in the face of moral dilemmas, on the analysis of psychologists and Buddhists alike, are seen in a particular way by Buddhists. From a Buddhist perspective, such emotions are trainable. It is expected that we can increase our disposition to have them, to feel morally appropriate emotions towards others more and more regularly, to feel such emotions at suitable moments more and more reliably; to feel them, in other words *to an ever greater and appropriate degree*.

Thirdly, the way in which this desirable state of affairs is produced is thought, again by Buddhists, to be the product of systematic training according to carefully described guidance.

These three points are worth restating: that *emotion* conditions moral action; that specific, deliberately undertaken, *practices* can condition the right emotion(s); that practices have, in a Buddhist context, already been grouped *systematically* in order to produce the morally significant emotions in question. Each of these three points dovetails nicely with the presentation of helping in the Sutta quoted above. We can see the connection from a close look at the text — of the *Āghatapaṭivinaya Sutta* — to which let us now return.

In the Sutta, which we discussed above, it is made explicitly clear that a person would help another, in the circumstances described, as the result of specific mental motivations. One of those listed is the skilful mental state of *karuṇā*. *Karuṇā,* like *mettā*, is not only a feeling or emotion, it is also the fruit of *practice*. There are systematic instructions in the Buddhist tradition as is relatively well known, for building it up, including towards others one finds it difficult to feel such emotions for.[22] And this confirms the point that is obvious for Buddhists, that *karuṇā* and other moral emotions *can be schooled* or *trained*. In fact, engage in the appropriate training — of *karuṇā* and other emotions — and you will be more likely to feel the right moral emotion. If you feel the right emotion, you will be more likely to act upon it, when you end up in a critical moral situation, such as that which formed the subject of the situationist experiment discussed above.[23] Such are the principles of Buddhist moral psychology.

I have now then a concrete recommendation to make, for the situationists.

Practices designed to foster *karuṇā* might easily be tested for their effect on prosocial behaviour in experimental conditions. If the Buddhist analysis is correct, we should see some positive effects. This would only be a short step from previous experimental research that has been done on

[22] Hallisey and Hansen (1996, 314-315).

[23] The Pali reads *So tasmiṃ purise kāruññaṃ yeva upaṭṭhāpeyya, anuddayaṃ yeva upaṭṭhāpeyya, anukampaṃyeva upaṭṭhāpeyya.*[PTS: A iii 189] 'He [the traveller coming the other way] would do what he could out of compassion, pity, & sympathy for the man'; *tr.* Thanissaro: http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an05/an05.162.than.html. The other two *morally relevant* emotions, then, are *anuddayā* and *anukampā*, translated by Thanissaro as 'pity and sympathy'. I understand, from conversation with a meditator, that in some meditation traditions, which are based in turn on the Pali commentaries' discussion, *anukampā* is seen as a preliminary emotion leading (once it has been developed) to the faculty of 'full-blown' compassion/*karuṇā.* In other words one trains via *anukampā* to achieve the stable trait of *being able to feel and act* out of *karuṇā.*

Buddhist meditation[24] — and on variants of it for a secular audience.[25] The link between moral action and meditation is, however, nowhere directly explored, either by situationist philosophers or by the experiments on which their philosophical discussions are based. Until meditation has been tested, as a mechanism of moral psychology, the data is perforce incomplete.

Let us return to the situationist worry about narratives and the apparent insignificance and in consequence of morally edifying stories when it comes to subsequent moral action, or the lack thereof. The point should be clear by now that stories *are only part of the picture, in the Buddhist context. The full picture* must include developmental practices as well. In the Buddhist context, stories are not told apart from *bhāvanā* practices, such practices being oriented towards the production of morally relevant emotion. Until situationist experiments take account of the developmental practices, including meditation practices, of the great moral traditions, they are not testing traditional moral psychologies at all. Therefore they cannot say that these psychologies have been tested and found wanting or lacking. The traditional psychology of character and character traits has not been put under the microscope if the actual practices associated with character have not been tested. They haven't been — not yet anyway. And yet they might be.

Going back to the beginnings of this paper, I promised that our investigation would get us closer to answering the question what is Buddhist ethics? I want to say now then that the above investigation has revealed the hidden potential of a movement in Buddhist ethics we might call 'particularism'. What is Particularism? I understand it as: the notion that specific practices, including meditation practices, may be considered to form part of, and may even *need to be considered to be the main focus of* 'Buddhist ethics'. Indeed there are, as I now argue, three interrelated considerations strongly suggesting that we should feel more positive about particularism. Equally, those in Buddhist studies who have proposed something like it should feel much less embarrassed about the fact. With these three considerations, I bring my remarks to a close.

In the philosophical debate we have reviewed we have seen that the situationist debate is only capable of being solved *by reference to* the particularities, the particular details of moral practice. How, precisely, is this so? The situationists deal — even if in so doing they court philosophical controversy[26] — with the specific and *measurable* details of moral motivation.

From the Buddhist point of view, the moral mechanics — the particularities — of helping behaviour are heavily based, as we have seen, on a specific moral emotion, *karuṇā*. This emotion is closely linked to meditation practices — the *particular* practices — which have been designed to engender the emotion of compassion.

At the same time, and therefore somewhat strangely, those Buddhist writers who have proposed that we should attend, in the matter of Buddhist ethics, to specific practices, including in

[24] John Kabat-Zinn (2004, *appendix* on experiments, pp. 454-6). *Mettā* and *karuṇā* would surely be fairly easy to test in the social psychology context. Indeed practices of their kind have been the focus of a battery of tests already, in other contexts. and examined by neuroscientists, for example, although it must be noted there is some debate as to what the findings mean philosophically. See Goleman (2004: 17-18). Compare Ricard (2007: i, 11-12, 186-201, *esp.* 197-9).

[25] Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2002).

[26] There is a large controversy, within philosophy, whether empirical data, including the results of experiments, can ever form part of philosophical ethics. The position I adopt is roughly that of Nagel (1980): scientists cannot set ethical values any more (or indeed any less) than the next person. Their discipline does not give them any special insight into the appropriateness of moral goals. *Except in this regard:* the mechanics of how we get to our goals is likely to be something scientists can help with. Compare the similar view of Flanagan (1993).

particular specific meditation practices, have often seemed embarrassed or in some way appeared to feel constrained by the apparent narrowness of their focus on such specific practice. One constraint they feel is the absence of a larger and wider definition, within Buddhist tradition, of 'ethics.' Several examples of this feeling of constraint could be given. I note one main example, which is that of Georges Dreyfus, but I think there are hints in other writers that this rather regrettable situation is so.[27]

The regret is as follows. Moral traditions and those writing about them should be proud of the specificity, the particular aspects of their practice tradition. For it is such aspects which might well hope, for instance, to solve the situationist debate. Does it matter whether the moral traditions to which such aspects belong have formulated, or not, any precise definition of 'ethics'. No, what matters is the detail of what they offer.

Georges Dreyfus then suggests that comparisons between Buddhist ethics and western philosophical ethics are hindered, because of a lack of specificity within Buddhist tradition about the philosophical category of ethics. It is a situation he and others lament.[28] But why should Buddhists worry? It is clear, as we will now see, that present-day analytic philosophers think that we do not actually need — in fact no tradition needs — to specify a precise definition of 'ethics', or indeed to spend time analyzing the meaning of such a category. In that respect, it is not clear what Buddhists are missing, if their traditions have not bothered much with such analysis.

In any case, as several philosophers have pointed out, ethical philosophers from Aristotle on have been rather unclear about there being any definition of morality. Such a definition might not even be in his philosophical vocabulary.[29] One reason why this does not matter, and why Aristotle can still be an ethicist while not attending to the difference between, for example, what is moral and what is non-moral, is that you do not need to get clear about such a thing, in order *to do ethics*, in the sense of living rightly, or being part of a moral tradition.[30] Jonathan Dancy sums up this point well:

> By morality I mean moral thought and judgment, and more generally distinctions such as that between right and wrong. I offer no account of the distinction between the moral and the non-moral — between moral and non-moral judgment, for instance. I simply rely on the reader's intuitive grasp of this distinction; in fact, I think that *there is no known theoretical way of characterizing it, and we had better not put too much stress on it*.[31]

Yet in recent years, in Buddhist Studies, great effort has been expended by scholars in elaborating particular definitions of ethics and morality, for use with respect to Buddhism.[32] While there is not the time and space here to evaluate whether their attempts are successful or not, it is a matter which must be returned to separately, and perhaps urgently, on another occasion. For too long Buddhists, and Buddhist scholars, and those that are both, have been encouraged to feel that a lack of precision within Buddhist tradition — regarding the philosophical definition of ethics and morality — is

[27] Why, for instance, do Hallisey and Hansen, in their otherwise excellent article feel the need to call Buddhist narratives merely a form of 'sub-ethics' rather than ethics proper? A similar nervousness, on the part of those writing about Buddhism, is often seen: 'is this thing I am writing about really *ethics*? Is it too particular?' But as we have seen modern philosophers need the particular if they are to make headway in debates, such as situationism, which is founded on the particularities of a range of situations.

[28] Dreyfus (1995). Compare Whitehill (1994).

[29] Anscombe (1958). See now further discussion of Anscombe's classic article by Crisp (2004).

[30] The point is well picked up by and developed throughout MacIntyre (1996).

[31] Dancy (2009, 3) *emphasis added*.

[32] See Keown (2001, comparing esp. 1-2 and 19) and Heim (2007).

necessarily a Bad Thing.[33] But there are good philosophical reasons, as we have just seen, for thinking that it is no such thing. What actually matters — and what may yet help the situationists — is precision with respect to specific practices: the practices relevant to the production of morally relevant emotion. Such practices are in great evidence within Buddhism. They include, but are not limited to, meditation practices. Experimental psychologists should test the particular virtue-cultivation practices recommended by traditions (and not just by Buddhist ones). Until they have done so philosophers should not, nor should they encourage the rest of us to, give up on Character, or Virtue, or the Virtues.

[33] Whitehill (1994, esp. 2).

Abbreviations

A	*Aṅguttara Nikāya*
PTS	Pali Text Society

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Reform Buddhism & Clinical Mindfulness: A Study in Cultural Adaptation

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Introduction & Summary

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) are similar medical interventions. Together, they constitute what we may call Clinical Mindfulness.

Formally, this emerges from Clinical Psychology. In terms of social history, it is related to contemporary Buddhism in the Euro-American culture-area. This in turn arises from the Reform Buddhism that developed from the 19th century on, (and also owes something to the 'therapy movement' of the 1950s and '60s).

Clinical Mindfulness has solid scientific credentials and proven applicability. Much of it is straightforward śamatha-vipaśyanā meditation. It also has distinctive features — and it leaves out core Buddhist teachings.

Is this then simply a half-realized presentation of Buddhist meditation? This paper suggests it is not, but instead represents a new development for a new context. This fresh approach can alleviate suffering in situations where standard Buddhist practice could never be accepted.

Equally, Clinical Mindfulness is a dynamic new field. It continues to develop. The cross-fertilization between psychology and contemporary Buddhism, from which it emerged, continues to enrich both sides.

Having first offered some basic assumptions, the paper reviews modern Buddhist history. It then outlines Clinical Mindfulness, its origins and importance. Finally, it offers some thoughts on how to realize the full potential of this exciting development.

Assumptions: Tradition, Culture and Adaptation

A social group shares patterns of thinking (categories, attitudes, values, goals) and of behavior (interpersonal, familial, organizational). A set of such shared patterns is a culture.

Much cultural patterning is unconscious: people neither recognize nor can readily explain it. Some is explicit: texts, oral or written, embody categories and symbols which support higher-level explanatory frameworks. Such category- and symbol-systems, which can be shared across cultures, are traditions.

A river changes, yet remains constant; a tradition likewise. Consider science.

The Newtonian corpus remains central. Formally, we define it as Newton did. Yet Newton's thought was conditioned by revelation, numerology and alchemy. He offered 17th-century Protestant élites an arcane summation of their religious world-view. By the 19th century, in contrast, his work underpinned common sense across an emerging global culture where God was sidelined, and what had been an abstract, philosophical narrative was now woven into the fabric of life.

Similarly, contemporary pharmaceutical researchers, sifting through millions of compounds remotely, may describe experimentation in terms formally reconcilable with those of Hooke and Boyle, but they conceive and undertake their work differently. And physiologists in East Asia may experiment on animals as Euro-Americans do, but then they dedicate one day a year to the animals' spirits[1].

Thus, as a tradition develops across cultures and over time, adherents live it in new ways. Each tradition must manage this process.

In today's dominant global culture, this presents a particular challenge. Certain default assumptions are strongly entrenched. The autonomous and unvarying world is assumed to be the source of all meaning: we arrange our words and thoughts to reflect it; truth is accurate reflection; accordingly, a given proposition must always carry the same force.

So, having learned them in a direct translation of the Sanskrit/Pali, we may see the elements of the pañcaskhandha, for instance, as objective categories comparable to those of modern science. However, the Buddha said that if people told him x existed or did not exist, then he would agree[2] — and his contemporaries would hardly have listed the same existents as scientifically trained people today. He also advised against the use of specialized language in transmitting the dharma and instead encouraged people to use expressions that came naturally[3], while himself freely exploiting and subverting contemporary terminology and cultural references.[4]

We can assume therefore that the pañcaskhandha series emerged naturally from habits of thought and speech common across the Buddha's culture. But the thought-world of Magadhans two-and-a-half millennia ago was clearly not that of any modern people.

So there is for instance no English word that 'means' vijñāna, certainly not 'consciousness'. Nor can the original vijñāna correspond at all closely with that of the homophonous terms in contemporary Thai, Burmese or Sinhala: that would be possible only if all the other categories in those languages, in relation to which the meaning of vijñāna emerges in use, had also been held constant. Today, therefore, the pañcaskhandha is a specialized, complex formulation, requiring careful analysis and deep reflection.

In what sense, then, is today's Buddhism the same as the Buddha's? The tradition itself offers an answer. It sees a person as a set of processes linked in a chain of conditioned origination. That would go for a group, too, or a linked series of groups such as carry on a tradition. On that basis, it does not matter that, since social, technical and linguistic forms and usages change continually,

1 Professor Denis Noble (personal communication)
2 Saṃyutta Nikāya III, 138
3 sakāya niruttiyā Vin II, 139. See *What the Buddha Thought* by RF Gombrich Equinox 2009 Ch 10
4 See the works of Richard Gombrich *passim*

the categories, which each Buddhist group relies on to understand the formal teaching, must also change. Meanings need not be held constant in a mechanical way, defined immutably by fixed forms of words. It is necessary only that Buddhist discourse can still help towards experiential ends equivalent to those it has always served.

To meet that requirement, the pañcaskhanda analysis must be invested with a meaning that works for people now, i.e. can truly help in improving their and others' quality of experience. Likewise the smṛtiprasthāna-sūtra: this is no mere technical instruction, to be understood intellectually and then implemented precisely by an act of will; instead, it points a way that we can follow by putting our heart into it. As the East Asian strand of the tradition teaches, we 'eat the painted cakes[5]'.

Thus, exploring what Buddhism has to say in a non-Buddhist culture is a two-way process. The first stage starts with the original texts and with what contemporary Buddhists do and say. From this material, one seeks to tease out patterns of language and behavior that can have equivalent impact in the new cultural context. But if Buddhist doctrines and practices rest on universal truths of human existence, they must emerge naturally from the life-experience of any population, even one that thinks and behaves quite differently from earlier Buddhists. So a successful transmission to a new population must, in a second stage, also involve a process of rediscovering the Dharma afresh from the perspective of the new culture.

We start with established Buddhist culture and work towards a new one. In so doing, we then find ourselves going back the other way, starting from the new culture and developing within it an understanding that makes sense in its own right within that culture —and so re-illumines the tradition. The net result is to reframe both the culture which is now assimilating Buddhism and the Buddhist tradition as a whole. Thus, post-Buddhist China differs from China before Buddhism — and the Buddhism that Europeans explore today would be different without the Chinese component.

Cross-cultural transmission is a subtle and complex process. So, meditation today may be in a way what it has always been and in a way different. The lived reality may today relate to other aspects of a practitioner's experience much as it did for earlier practitioners — and at the same time the linguistic and conceptual categories that support the practice must inevitably differ in detail, as may the emotional tone, and doubtless some of the precise behaviors too.

Reform Buddhism

As Western people have striven to assimilate Buddhist wisdom, people from established Buddhist cultures have reacted to influences from the West. Over the last two centuries, a process of cross-cultural accommodation has ensued.

Developments in Asian Buddhism, led principally by Asians of Buddhist culture with a modern ('Westernized') education, have been described as Buddhist Modernism[6] and 'Protestant Buddhism'[7]. These Asian developments can also be considered in relation to the connected activities

[5] What we find in the texts of the tradition does not directly satisfy our spiritual hunger: it is not like a rice-cake, which we can simply consume. Instead it is like a painted cake. Nonetheless, "except for the pictured cakes, there is no medicine for satisfying hunger." See, e.g. http://www.mro.org/mr/archive/22-1/articles/paintedcakes.html.

[6] See Heinz Bechert's *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft* (1966)

[7] See Gombrich's and Obeysekere's *Buddhism Transformed* pp 201 ff.

of Buddhist-inclined Westerners.[8] In this perspective, we may see 'Reform Buddhism' as a trans-cultural outgrowth of the tradition. Reform Buddhism has contributed much to Clinical Mindfulness.

The 19th & Early 20th Centuries: Background & Overview

The 19th century saw dramatic change across Asia. This was reflected in Asia's Buddhist traditions. The standard analysis[9] suggests that:

- Those traditions and their adherents were initially:
    - quite closely bound up with mythological and magical materials and practices;
    - sparing in their use of classical texts, (principally for chanting);
    - led largely by monks, whom the laity sought to serve, and strongly focused on maintaining monastic communities;
    - often understood as fulfilling a ritual function; and
    - split into culturally-distinct religious streams, each with in its own norms, sometimes a little ethnic-particularist and backward-looking.
- Reformers aimed:
    - to purge superstition;
    - to use classical texts as the touchstone for a progressive rediscovery and remolding of the tradition;
    - to bring laypeople forward as Buddhist leaders and to make serving society an explicit, key goal;
    - to understand meditation as vital to that social function; and
    - to promote Buddhism world-wide as a universal, relatively secular system of philosophy and practical psychology with contemporary resonance.

This contrast can be overstated. The reform movement built on long-established tendencies.

The Vimalakīrtinirdeśa indicates a movement towards laicization in Indian Buddhism from early in the Common Era. That movement strengthened in China.[10] As early as the sixteenth century, Southeast Asian rulers, seeking to control the Sangha, exhibited a new focus on textual learning.[11]

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8 David McMahan speaks of 'forms of Buddhism that have emerged out of an engagement with the dominant cultural and intellectual forces of modernity… a cocreation of Asians Europeans and Americans'': *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 pp 5-6

9 Helen Hardacre has analyzed this phenomenon in relation to Japan, for instance in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan* (Brill 1997). A review of similar trends in Chinese Buddhism by Eyal Aviv of Harvard is in the forthcoming edition of the Journal of the OCBS (JOCBS: see www.ocbs.org). In relation to Theravada, Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeysekere (*op cit.*) have analyzed trends in Sinhalese Buddhism from the 19th century.

10 Twitchett, Denis, and Fairbank, John. *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8, Part 2.* 1998. p. 949

11 See my colleague Khammai Dhammasami's as yet unpublished thesis

Also, lay leadership, and lay involvement in meditative practice, can be seen in areas of traditional Southeast Asian Buddhism.[12]

Yet the modern period saw a distinct break. The world was transformed by the technological change and particularly the mass literacy that accompanied the development of capitalist economies and class societies. Printing and public education gave laypeople direct access to the foundational texts of their traditions; examination systems trained them to read texts for themselves. Meanwhile, economic growth forced change. Feudal thinking and practice lost currency: it was no longer sufficient to proclaim an unvarying, unquestionable truth rooted in popular cosmology.

The process and the effects were everywhere comparable. While what happened in Buddhist Asia can be seen in part as an effort to adopt approaches that had been successful in Europe, it must also represent an independent adjustment to global change.

To exploit expanding commercial opportunities, new élites had formed. Some of these people had begun to see religion as arising from rational individuals' natural reactions to the mysterious cosmos[13], reactions validated by their authenticity. As with European Romanticism and non-conformist Protestantism, so here this allowed considerable license.

Among other things, it helped these new-élite Buddhists to justify their status to themselves in a distinctively modern way. In Europe, the theology of salvation had served this purpose; in Buddhist countries, the rhetoric of karma/saṃsāra could similarly buttress a meritocratic narrative.[14]

It also allowed Asian reformers to claim the authority of science, the great meta-narrative of modernity. The objective reality invoked by science had, they could claim, an additional, psychological dimension, which people could with guidance explore for themselves; Buddhism provided such guidance.[15]

Here, Asians found common ground with Western dissidents. Since the Romantic period, European culture had been split: struggling to reconcile scientific reason and the society it molded with the need for psychological balance, many had rejected conventional ideas. Of these, a few wanted no part of the scientific revolution; many struggled to redefine it so as to allow for psychological realities that otherwise tended to be dismissed as merely subjective.[16]

Thus Reform Buddhists often suggested that the psychological categories of Sūtra, Abhidharma and later Buddhist Philosophy might be objective, equivalent to physical categories. Meditation, accordingly, sometimes came to be presented technically, as an almost algorithmic process: follow this procedure and you will induce an elevated state of being. Moreover, techniques are by definition instrumental, so meditation was linked to practical gains, such as improved performance in work and family roles.

[12] See Kamala Tiyavanich's *Forest Recollection* University of Hawaii Press, 1997. Also the works of Nicola Tannenbaum

[13] This approach to religion was common in progressive circles world-wide. In the New York Times of 9th November 1930, Einstein wrote:

The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought. …The beginnings of cosmic religious feeling already appear at an early stage …. Buddhism … contains a much stronger element of this. [T]his kind of religious feeling…knows no dogma and no God conceived in man's image.

[14] See Weber, Tawney. The Protestant buttressing of commercial élite status has long established parallels in Buddhism.

[15] See the section on Buddhism and Science in Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* Also, Taixu, as per note 19 below

[16] See William James

Protagonists & currents

The interfaith movement owes much to innovative groups in Anglo-American dissenting Protestantism, such as the New England Transcendentalists, with their idealized, non-theistic religion of cosmic consciousness. The 1893 Parliament of Religions in Chicago reflected their values. The Buddhists made a great impact, particularly Anagārika Dharmapāla and Soyen Shaku (whose translator was DT Suzuki[17]).

These were Reform Buddhists: modernizing Asians who collaborated with Europeans inspired by Buddhist texts. They were influential across the Buddhist world:

- In Thailand, Prince Vajirañāṇa-varorasa studied Western science and social organization intensively before launching his reforms. He abandoned the Traiphum cosmology and sought to anchor the institutions and the practices of Thai Buddhism in an intellectual engagement with canonical texts based on sound scholarship, both Eastern and Western.
- In Japan, the Meiji Restoration disrupted established Buddhist institutions and practices; upholders of the tradition like Soyen Shaku had to revalidate it in a context of rapid, radical modernization.
- In China, Master Taixu's reform plans involved: reducing numbers of monks;[18] purging Buddhism of superstition, and validating it by reference to Science;[19] and adapting Pure Land doctrine to the cause of social reform.[20]
- In South Asia:
    - Henry Olcott, a can-do American, combined with Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thera, a Sinhala monk who had adapted the preaching style of the Christian missionaries, to propagate a Buddhism that drew heavily on the work of TW Rhys Davids, an idealistic Pali scholar from a dissenting Protestant background.
    - Dharmapāla, an ethnic and cultural nationalist from the new Sinhala élite, joined with Sir Edwin Arnold, pillar of the British establishment and world-wide popularizer of modern Buddhism, in setting up the Mahābodhi Society.
- Most importantly for our topic, in Burma:

    > with the gradual … encroachment of the British, …the Le-di Hsa-ya-daw… by writing and preaching about meditation… inspired the imagination of the Buddhist masses… [and] set up and serviced one of the earliest Buddhist missionary organizations…. In 1914 he wrote… *A Commentary on… Meditation*, 'for the benefit of European Buddhists'[21]

    His movement, though native to Burma, was adapted to modern circumstances:

    > …the meditation center is open to both monks and unordained laity for short… but intensive courses in meditation using methods which focus mainly on the body …[22].

[17] *Teaching Mindfulness* (McCown, Reibel and Singer) Springer 2010 p 40
[18] Pittman, Don A. *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism.* Hawai'i UP. Honolulu, 2001 p238
[19] Taixu, "Science and Buddhism" *Lectures in Buddhism* Paris, 1928
[20] pg. 427, Taixu, "On Establishing a Pure Land on Earth." *Complete Works.* Taipei 1956.
[21] *Traditions of Buddhist practice in Burma* (Gustaaf Houtman) p 31
[22] Ibid p 2

Hitherto, meditation had been (by different accounts, in different places) a monkly specialism or a diffuse element of peasant culture. Now, it was a skill to be taught to the new middle classes by sudden immersion (the focus on the body facilitated this).

- The Thai Forest tradition[23] followed a similar course. By the period of Ajahn Chah, these Southeast Asian developments had come to exercise considerable influence.[24].

Thus Reform Buddhists sought to revive the tradition. Their approaches varied, e.g.:

- Some promoted Buddhism as a religious identity.
- Others stressed interfaith activism and/or secularism.

In the first category were Asian monks like Ledi Sayadaw and nationalists like Dharmapāla, and also some pioneering Western monks:

- Allan Bennett (Bhikkhu Ānanda Metteyya, 1872 - 1923) opened The Training Of The Mind with a summary of the Reform-Buddhist program:

> The Religion of the Buddhas is… a Practical Philosophy. It is not a collection of dogmas which are to be accepted and believed… but a series of statements and propositions which, in the first place, are to be intellectually grasped and comprehended; in the second, to be applied to every action[25]

- Anton Gueth (Nyānatiloka Mahāthera, 1878 - 1957) wrote The Word of the Buddha: an Outline of the Ethico-philosophical System of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon. The title indicates how that program was to be implemented by interpreting foundational texts in modern terms.
- Siegmund Feniger (Nyānaponika Mahāthera 1901-1994), who continued Nyānatiloka's scholarly work, studied meditation under Mahasi Sayadaw Thera before publishing his classic The Heart of Buddhist Meditation. This introduced the influential formula 'register and dismiss' to describe what later Clinical Mindfulness would later call non-judgmental awareness.

The second group is more diffuse:

- Initially, one important strand was close to the Theosophical Society.
    - Olcott[26] articulated the early Reform Buddhist program in his 'Buddhist Catechism' and stimulated organizational initiatives like the YMBA.
    - Under the influence of Annie Besant's Theosophy, the Indian wing of the Mahabodhi Society gave currency to a loose, generalized definition of Buddhism (not unlike what we see in 1960s America). Babasaheb Ambedkar used the latitude this offered to develop his social activism.

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23 See Kamal Tiyavanich, *op cit.*

24 They would be important for Clinical Mindfulness via Jack Kornfeld and Jon Kabat-Zinn, to mention only two

25 http://www.astronargon.us/?cat=17

26 Cf. Stephen Prothero *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* by Indiana University Press. (and Tricycle, Fall 1996 pp. 13-19, and http://aryasangha.org/olcott-prothero.htm): [Olcott said] "If Buddhism contained a single dogma that we were compelled to accept, we would not have … remained Buddhists ten minutes." Olcott remained disturbed by "the shocking ignorance of the Sinhalese about Buddhism." Like Olcott, pioneering Buddhologists such as Rhys Davids (whom Olcott eagerly read) tended to … praise the ancient wisdom of the East and to condemn its modern manifestations — to view Asian religious traditions much like Calvin viewed the human race: as fallen from some Edenic past.

- Shri Goenka's Burmese-inspired Vipassanā movement took root in that same Indian context. Wary of Hindu-fundamentalist opposition, Goenka presented meditation as a religiously-neutral, quasi-scientific technique: just something you can do, which you'll find beneficial. So his approach is strictly behavioral (and quite tough): participants on his courses sit for long periods with fairly minimal preparation. This approach has converged strikingly with important western developments (see on).

- While the thinking and practice of most modern Thai and Burmese masters diverges from the Buddhism of many Southeast Asian laypeople, with its focus on merit-making, such divergences are generally passed over in silence. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, by contrast, was rather direct. Author of the pamphlet *No Religion*, he established a context for such secular-Buddhist Britons as Christopher Titmuss and Stephen Batchelor, who helped establish Gaia House (see on).

These two categories were fluid. Dharmapāla emerged from Olcott's syncretistic movement but developed a militant, somewhat ethnic-particularist Buddhist agenda. Suzuki, emblematic of Japanese Buddhism, was nationalist in the 1930s and internationalist in the 50s.

Rhetorical necessity, if nothing else, often led both tendencies to adopt similar positions. Presenting meditation as a behavioral technique would be an example.

There is a contrast with Tibetan Buddhism, which emerged later onto the global scene. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is a great reformer, and has adapted many Reform-Buddhist tropes. The Tibetans have also offered meditation to all comers. But for Tibetan Buddhists, the link between ritual and meditation is highly developed and Madhyamaka philosophy is central, particularly among the Gelugs.

The earlier impulse outlined above draws heavily on Southern Buddhist traditions. In best scientific (and Protestant) style, Reform Buddhism has traced the tradition back to its earliest strata and so has given particular respect to the Pali material. The Zen component is distinctive, but it shares a similar behavioral biasClinical Mindfulness, as we shall see, comes out of Behaviorism. So it finds the behavioral framing of meditation congenial. But it has no need to extend the definition of science so as to confer some objective reality upon the inner life (relying instead on the behavioral indices of psychological activity).

Preliminary Reflections

Scientific reality is all about objectivity. Objects, in this context, are measurable, so their existence is mathematical as much as palpable. They are defined by processes of change that are likewise reducible to mathematics and therefore mechanical. Such a reality is hardly conceivable, anywhere, before about 1500.

For today's average scientific man, life and consciousness are narrowly distributed across the universe, which is largely inert. Before 1500, common sense everywhere saw the universe itself as in some way living, conscious and inhabited by non-material beings.

That universe differs from the modern, scientific one, even if the latter does contain quarks. Intellectually, gods and quarks may be alike, as hypothetical entities; psychologically, they differ as an encounter differs from an observation.

One can overstate this: as populations have increased and social systems become more complex, all cultures have developed a more materialist perspective. Still, the contemporary sense of objective reality has no direct parallel in pre-scientific culture.

Thus, the Buddha's positions were rational-empirical — but not in the contemporary manner. He sought to trigger psychological shifts in an audience whose psychology was not modern. The then-dominant ideology underpinned an agrarian social structure with a notion of karmic birthright, and with a hierarchy of access to spiritual power that corresponded to closed knowledge-systems and initiatory language-games; the Buddha's common-sense practicality served to undermine that ideology.

So, yes, the Buddha is undogmatic and encourages personal enquiry — and the validity that can be claimed for Buddhist analyses is compatible with scientific understanding. But a scientific term refers to measurements that anyone can make at any time whereas, to appreciate the categories of the pañcaskhandha or pratītyasamutpāda, people need to work on themselves with a sincere wish to improve their and others' experience. Similarly, a technical procedure is effective by virtue of the formal precision with which it is applied whereas meditation involves putting your heart into it (śraddhā).

It may therefore not always be helpful to frame a Buddhist formula as objectively true, or a Buddhist practice as technically effective. What matters is the understanding and the experience that can arise in particular ways for particular people as they work with the formula and cultivate the practice. That lived reality may have a truth and an efficacy more valuable than anything to do with objects or techniques.

If one neglects the challenge of transmitting meanings from remote cultures and instead assumes we have direct access to the Buddha's words, then one may reason that the analyses and instructions found in the texts, if not erroneous, must be correct according to today's conventional thinking. But that may prove an adaptation too far: upāya-akauśalya. For instance, it may tempt us to think that those who formally acknowledge Buddhist truths are 'objectively' better placed than those who do not. In sharpening the contrast between damnation and salvation, guilt and righteousness, Protestant Christianity sought to cope with the psychological tensions inevitable in a period of wrenching socio-economic change. Something similar may occasionally apply with Reform Buddhism.

The 20th Century Psychological Revolution

By the 20th century, many in the West found the dialectic of guilt and righteousness obsessional and intolerable. The effort of industrialization had caused people to repress their spontaneous feelings; this had generated great psychological distress, expressed in two world wars; people needed to escape their demons. The psycho-analytic movement, centered round Freud and Jung, testified and ministered to that need. It started a process that culminated in post-war America.

Therapy and Buddhism:

Consider a Californian movie scene. Danny de Vito yells at Steve Martin, reaches a climax and subsides. Steve Martin says: "Well, you certainly *are* in touch with your anger."

People call this 'psychobabble', suggesting it masks a failure to face issues. But Steve Martin has avoided getting trapped in de Vito's quarrel, and has directed de Vito's attention to his emotional disturbance.

Taxed with the difficulties that his policies were causing, President Bill Clinton similarly responded "I feel your pain." Again, the attention shifts from the world to how people process their experience. This very Buddhist shift is proper to the language of therapy.

19th-century convention had distinguished between a few sorry souls who were 'mad' and the 'normal' majority: the 'normal' never reflected on their state of mind (such reflection indicated you might not be normal). Psycho-analysis had started to undermine this view. Then, events in the 1940s had indicated that madness was widespread; and in the 1950s, everybody contemplated the prospect that our leaders, supposed pillars of sanity, might soon destroy humanity. Psycho-therapy blossomed.

It became part of everyday life, something anyone might undertake, a service to buy. To reduce cost and increase availability, therapy was delivered in a group setting, so people became used to talking openly about mental states. New habits of language developed.

Management training began to incorporate content drawn from therapy. So-called T-groups shifted the emphasis from combating specific ills to becoming generally stable and well-motivated. The Human Relations School argued such training was necessary for people to work well. Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs, suggesting that people were most productive when motivated to achieve psychological balance (called 'self-realization.').[27]

In parallel, there was a new surge of interest in Buddhism, particularly Zen. Suzuki, Watts and others stressed the primacy of experience; Kerouac and the 'beats' incorporated some of their material into a cult of spontaneity associated with Jazz music.

In time, these two developments cross-fertilized. Some of the T-group ethos and procedures transferred across to Reform-Buddhist foundations like the Insight Meditation Society; therapists, meanwhile, began to try meditation.

Altered states:

In the 1960s, young people in the industrialized world were often materially secure but psychologically stultified. There was a widely felt need to break out of rigid, meaningless convention; risk aversion was low and strong, positive experiences seemed potentially available; accordingly, many in the post-war generation imagined they could and must create a new, radically different, more humane culture.

[27] A. H. Maslow "A Theory of Human Motivation" Psychological Review, issue 50 (1943) pp 370-396.

Conditioned, as they saw it, into abstract, bloodless, self-conscious over-rationality, they wished to live spontaneously. So, physically altered states of consciousness seemed attractive. There was much experimentation with psychotropic agents, particularly LSD.

Interest in meditation grew from a similar impulse. Here was another physical, behavioral way to generate 'peak' experiences, which opened the body to sensation and the mind to intuition.

The new life these people sought did involve thinking differently. But that sometimes seemed a mere by-product of altered consciousness. Indeed, there was some revulsion against too much thinking, which was identified with the oppressive mindset that prevented people from living directly, in momentary experience. Abstract rationality seemed apt to leave a spiritual void, which consumerism could not hide. As a result, the population seemed almost possessed by a disembodied power ('the system'). The solution they saw was to reconnect with feelings.

Some were anti-rationalists, who valued sensation above all. Others, while deprecating the crasser attitudes and behaviors of *homo oeconomicus*, wished to reconcile reason with intuition.

So, one outgrowth of the 60s movement focused on a re-framing of science. Information Technology came to be seen as a new and better way of applying reason, which would free humanity from the need to dominate and abuse nature.

Another, not dissimilar line of development led again to Buddhism. This tradition seemed to offer a way of cutting through the puzzles: just practice, sit and breathe — and the intellectual and psychological clouds would dissolve. Reason was part of this process, but somewhat separate from (and subordinate to) experience, which depended on behavior.

So the 1950s and 60s gave western Buddhism a new impulse. While it remained intellectual, it became less philosophical, more behavioral. Like the IT crowd, these Buddhists sought a practical outlet for their reasonable impulse towards change.

Meditation Centers:

A complex economy, where productive functions are highly differentiated, gives a society that emphasizes functional roles (manager, professor) over intimate relationships (parent, elder). Here, age-old models of spiritual mentorship are difficult to maintain.

One solution is to reframe the mentor as primarily an expert. That goes along with a technical understanding of meditation.

It is perhaps on that basis that some Reform Buddhist groups have prospered. Key examples would be the Insight Meditation Society in the US[28] and Gaia House in the UK.[29]

These organizations are clearly Buddhist, drawing particular inspiration from early Buddhism, but they link to no specific lineage and involve monks only peripherally. They offer 'all-comers' courses/retreats. For those new to meditation, preparation is minimal. After a general explanation of

[28] This was founded in Barre, Massachusetts, USA in 1975 by Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, and Jack Kornfield

[29] This grows from an initiative of Christopher Titmuss and Christina Feldman in 1976. Stephen Batchelor has been a major influence.

the process, people sit silently in a group. Practice is interspersed with feedback, both in the group and one-to-one with retreat leaders.

This secular, largely post-Protestant or post-Jewish approach is behavioral and technical.

Simply sitting, concentrating, registering-and-dismissing, etc. is supposed to induce a new pattern of experience. Correctly applied, the technique produces the result.

Personal relationships across the group are encouraged and charismatic teachers prized. But the technique is central: teachers are experts who promote its correct understanding and application.

As a practitioner progresses, more Buddhist background may be introduced, e.g. by way of abhidharma. This is not necessarily seen as an occasion for self-examination and debate, more perhaps as a technical description of how things are.

Habitués of these centers can advance to a deep, practical understanding of śamatha-vipaśyanā, and indeed of Buddhism, but initially (as in the Goenka approach) they must work hard to acquire the habit from a standing start. Where in a temple or Dharma Centre one might start with a body of doctrine and a collective devotional impulse, this more secular environment offers a model of on-the-job training with individual responsibility.

There is a contrast with Tibetan Buddhist institutions. The Tibetans set great store on ritual, lineages and charismatic leaders. They generally work hard to maintain their cultural specificity, and those that become most obviously acculturated, like Trungpa Rinpoche's Shambala movement, tend to espouse the romantic/poetic side of the 60s culture rather than the behavioral/reasonable side.

Tibetan Buddhism has gone from strength to strength. Today, the large and growing volume of American university research into Buddhism is overwhelmingly concentrated upon Tibetan sources. Meanwhile, formal Zen and Theravada have perhaps lost a little of their appeal.

Thus some polarization is evident. Religious Buddhism thrives particularly in its Tibetan form. The secular model of the Mindfulness Centers works well where religious overtones are unacceptable.

That model has been influential in the development of Clinical Mindfulness. Yet Clinical Mindfulness differs in important respects.

Clinical Mindfulness:

Mental illness is a great and growing burden. The World Health Organization says that Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) is the second biggest health challenge world-wide after heart disease.[30]

In the United States, approximately 20-25% of women and 12% of men will experience major depression at least once in their lifetimes, which will completely incapacitate them for a significant period; sufferers typically undergo repeated episodes; around 3.4% of people with chronic, recurrent depression commit suicide.[31]

[30] Murray, C. J. & Lopez, A. D. (1997) Alternative projections of mortality and disability by cause 1990-2020: global burden of disease study. *Lancet*, **349**, 1498-1504

[31] Barlow DH. *Abnormal psychology: An integrative approach (5th ed.)*. Belmont, CA, USA: Thomson Wadsworth;

Over recent decades, the incidence of depression has been rising and the average age of first onset has been falling[32]. In the UK, 13 million working days are lost annually to depression, anxiety and stress.[33]

Behavioral Therapy:

How to understand this, and what to do about it? The default position of modern medicine is that the body is a machine; diseases correspond to physical or chemical malfunction. So, depression represents a deficiency of neurotransmitters, which anti-depressant drugs can remedy.

But life-circumstances, and people's reactions to them, are clearly relevant: the incidence of mental illness rises with stress levels. Non-biological therapies are therefore important.

The elaborate psycho-analytic theories derived from Freud, Jung, etc. led to highly personalized therapy. This was hardly suited to mass application, such as became necessary after the Second World War, from which thousands returned with significant psychological impairment. Interest turned instead to what psychology could offer.

Experimental psychology has focused on what is observable, i.e. behavior. At first, behaviorism dealt with animals: Pavlov and Skinner trained them using 'operant conditioning', i.e. reward and punishment. In the late-1940s, this approach was extended to therapy for war veterans. But the analysis and manipulation of physical behavior has only applicability in case of mental problems.

After that, there was an effort to establish objective facts about how people experience their mental processes. The movements of the mind could then be reconceptualized as cognitive behavior.[34]

Aaron Beck found that we tend to have "automatic thoughts." They come into our minds unbidden and we react to them unthinkingly.[35] Dysfunctional mental processes become entrenched.

His approach, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), encourages people to distance themselves from their mental contents. Suppose the belief arises that "I can't do anything right." The mind then tends to dwell on instances of failure. So the first stage is to switch focus, so that the mind moves from thinking "I do nothing right" to focus instead on the recognition "I have had a thought that 'I do nothing right'". By this process of 'decentering', one can start to evaluate one's thoughts and beliefs realistically. Then, by an exercise of intellect and will, one may be able to adopt new, more suitable cognitive strategies.

CBT proved more effective than previous 'talking therapies' and was also quicker and cheaper. Soon, it was widely used.

2005, pp. 248–49

[32] See James O (1998) Britain On The Couch: Treating A Low Serotonin Society: Why We're Unhappier Than We Were In The 1950s – Despite being Richer London: Arrow Also: Klerman GL Weissman MM (1989) Journal American Medical Association, 261 (15) p2229-35

[33] Flaxman PE and Bond FW, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy In The Workplace, in Baer RA (2003) Mindfulness-Based Treatment Approaches: Clinician's Guide To Evidence And Applications, Academic Press: San Diego p377

[34] Data processing helped. From the 1960s, using standardized forms, carefully designed and rigorously applied, psychologists could gather and analyze masses of patient reports to establish objective facts about cognitive behavior.

[35] Beck, Aaron (1997). "The Past and the future of Cognitive Therapy". *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and* Research 6 (4): pp276-284

CBT has come to be known as the Second Wave of behavioral therapy. Over the last 20 years, a Third Wave has developed, which has converged with the growth of Meditation Centers.

This posits that the best way to change cognitive behavior may be indirectly. There is no need to aim specifically to replace dysfunctional mental contents. Instead, we can simply learn to recognize and explore skilfully whatever thoughts and feelings arise. By training ourselves, and particularly by maintaining awareness of the body, we can become more conscious of our momentary experience, and this will allow us to get a distance on automatic thoughts, so we can avoid getting carried away. Then it becomes natural for us, in the moment, to exercise choice over how we respond. Thus our cognitive behavior will change.

This approach emerged from 40 years of CBT. At the same time, the resemblance to śamatha-vipaśyanā did not escape notice.

Medical professionals who had learned Buddhist meditation could see that similar training programs were being developed from two quite different perspectives. Meditation Centers offered all comers a secularized mindfulness package (which, moreover, bore traces of the surrounding, therapy-imbued culture); similarly, in CBT sessions, patients learned to observe their cognitions, assumptions, judgments and beliefs with a view to changing them and so recovering from mental distress.

The practices were converging. But the discourses differed. How to marry them?

Clinical Mindfulness

It took time. The first stage was to incorporate meditation practices into a medically respectable therapy that needed no elaborate psychological theory to justify it. A Professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School found a way some 30 years ago.

Jon Kabat-Zinn had learned śamatha-vipaśyanā as a young man. As a consultant physician in Boston, he realized it had much to contribute to modern medicine.

Accordingly, he developed a program for patients with chronic pain. He called it Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

It is based on mindfulness of the body — following the breath, some gentle yoga stretches and a 'body scan', in which attention is directed to the different areas of the body, first successively and then together. As well as being aware of bodily sensations, participants are encouraged to prize them — an important early exercise involves eating a raisin with full appreciation. There are also elements of psycho-education, where participants discuss their symptoms, and difficulties in coping with them, while the leader offers input. This is a group-training; group-members are encouraged to discuss their experience and bond together.

Over 17,000 have gone through the University of Massachusetts' immensely influential MBSR program. It has been adapted for use in prisons, schools, workplaces, nursing homes and in family and community settings. It has also stimulated neuroscientific and physiological research, which has shown for instance how following the breath can retrain neural pathways[36]. But until the turn of the 21st century, it remained something of a medical curiosity: it worked, yes, but there was no compelling theory as to how.

The 2002 publication of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy[37]ñ for Depression by Segal, Williams and Teasdale marked a significant advance.

- MBCT offered a cognitive model of relapse in depression, postulating that:
    - Negative mood-states prefigure relapse but do not cause it.
    - What triggers relapse is an inappropriate reaction to low mood when it arises.
    - Specifically, when patients go into problem-solving mode, they become vulnerable:
        - assuming they must take steps to banish the low mood, they become agitated; and then,
        - unable to achieve the desired result, they ruminate and fall into despair.
    - If patients can learn not to over-react in this way, they can more easily avoid relapse.
- It then described a training program, based heavily on MBSR, designed to test that model.

This is a manualized program: the manual defines who will deliver the training and what they will do. With identically qualified people delivering identical training, it is assumed that each instance of the program is identical: it is a standardized treatment, a reproducible experiment. So it can be tested in Randomized Controlled Trials.

One of the book's authors, Mark Williams, led a major series of such trials. The results were positive. The UK's National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has accordingly recommended MBCT as a primary treatment for preventing relapse in depression.[38]

In his introduction to the latest edition, Kabat-Zinn highlights how here, for the first time, the efficacy of mindfulness is demonstrated in scientific terms. A hypothesis as to how it works has been successfully tested. In this way, Buddhist practices have been integrated into the mainstream of contemporary psychology.

Wider Implications

Limiting Language

Moreover, Clinical Mindfulness points towards an overall explanation for the ever-increasing psychological dysfunction in (post-)industrial societies. It suggests that:

[36] Daniel J. Siegel *Mindfulness training and neural integration* in the journal Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience 2007 December; 2(4): 259–263.

[37] (abbreviated to MBCT)

[38] National Clinical Practice Guidelines, Number 23; London, HMSO 2005 (updated 2009)

- the reason why people in such societies find it hard to maintain psychological balance is that they are conditioned to live life as a series of problem-solving episodes; and that
- such dysfunctional conditioning is now built into everyday thinking and ordinary language, so that it is as difficult as it is important for us to decondition ourselves.

Mark Williams' 2008 paper Mindfulness, Depression and Modes of Mind [39] explains this.

- It first extends the standard definition of (clinical) mindfulness as 'non-judgmental moment-to-moment awareness', to offer:

  the awareness that emerges as a by-product of cultivating three related skills:

  - intentionally paying attention to moment-by-moment events … in the internal and external world,
  - noticing habitual reactions to such events, often characterized by aversion or attachment…,
  - cultivating the ability to respond to events, and to our reactions to them, with an attitude of open curiosity and compassion… of non-judgment and acceptance… 'letting go' of negative thoughts and unattainable self-guides

- Then it contrasts mindfulness with 'discrepancy-based processing,' glossed as 'doing mode,' which involves:

  the pursuit of goals… [where t]he fundamental unit of analysis is … a triple: the current state, the goal …, and actions to diminish the difference ….

  People are conditioned to operate in doing mode, but when it comes to managing their own mental states this incapacitates them.

  For external problems (e.g. getting the car to the garage for servicing)… the checking mechanism does not itself affect the external circumstances (checking how far it is to the garage does not affect the actual distance left to travel). However, when the same mode is activated as a way to reduce distress, several aspects can make things worse.

  First, checking the degree of discrepancy and finding a mismatch (comparing how I feel with how I'd like to feel) can actually increase distress….

  Second, attempts to 'problem-solve' using ruminative/analytic processing act to reduce problem-solving …

  Third, some operations aimed at directly reducing distress, e.g. attempts to avoid or suppress the [distressing] thoughts, feelings and images, make subsequent intrusion by those contents more likely …

  Finally, the known effect of mood on memory makes it more difficult to retrieve information that might provide an alternative perspective …

[39] Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2008

Generalizing, Williams observes that this illustrates certain limitations of language-based mental processes:

> [I]n doing mode, ideas (often language based) are taken to be true. By contrast… the invitation during meditation is to observe what happens if the products of inner language are not reinforced….
>
> [W]hat is thought about is no longer the central concern. [This] gives the opportunity to learn… that relating to the world from inside language interferes with open contact with the present moment… [W]hen we engage in thinking, we lose contact with the present. … [F]or all its advantages, thinking narrows perception.…
>
> [O]ne of the core functions of language (predicting and evaluating), when applied to private events (thoughts and images, body sensations and emotional feelings), results naturally in experiential avoidance (not wanting to feel or think certain things that are already present).
>
> …[T]hinking, reason-giving, emotional control… narrow the relevant stimulus-functions in any situation to those that emerge from within language itself. Meditation provides a context in which, by seeing language from a de-centered or 'de-fused' perspective, the person can make contact with a broader range of events… to help regulate and inform behavior.

This restrained formulation makes a limited case to a specialist audience. In more general terms, we might say that in a competitive, self-consciously meritocratic culture, social pressures commonly impel people to frame their lives in narrowly functional terms.

To be successful and so gain social recognition and material benefits, we must become effective problem-solvers, i.e. must adopt an abstract, instrumentalized pattern of thinking suitable for solving technical problem. If ever we should fail in this endeavor, we would by implication be worthless. Thus Williams' patients' experience is that thinking means identifying entities with fixed characteristics which can be manipulated for measurable ends, and constitutes a continuing obligation. They tend constantly to worry whether they are doing well enough, and, to cope with this insecurity, adopt the cognitive behaviors identified with success, which increase their distress[40]. They need an alternative.

MBCT offers one. The program encourages participants to register and dismiss. When anger arises, they learn, the reaction need not be to be to think about the object of the anger or the fact "I am angry." Instead, one may simply recognize that 'there is anger' — just as there may be a cloud passing across the sky. The reflex of constant self-reference is unnecessary and unhelpful. As Kabat-Zinn puts it: your thoughts are just thoughts … they are not 'you' or 'reality'[41]

Thus participants may start to attain a useful understanding of taṇhā ("I can let go of the problem-solving drive"), anātmā ("I needn't keep referring everything to me") and śūnyatā ("These things I worry about — there's no need to see them all as so terribly real"). Without referring to classical Buddhist formulations, MBCT can still lead people towards the relevant experience.

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[40] See, e.g. Earley, J. and Weiss, B. (2010) "Self-Therapy for Your Inner Critic", Pattern System Books. Some may project such critical voices outward, onto others. They are then prey to self-aggrandizement.

[41] *Full Catastrophe Living* pp 69-70

It therefore corresponds to Stage 2 in the cross-cultural transmission process discussed above (page 1). It offers an object lesson in using elements of non-Buddhist culture to build a new pattern of Buddhist understanding.

A User-Friendly and Successful Approach

Clinical Mindfulness is designed by professionals trained in a caring role. They recognize that they are asking participants to change deep-seated habits and that limited time is available to help them do so. So every effort is devoted to producing positive experiences and coping with adverse reactions.

Compare this, for instance, with a traditional Zendo, where novices are expected to maintain the posture for long periods without much support. Classically, indeed, the support provided is negative — those who slump are beaten.

In Clinical Mindfulness, the participant is invited rather than challenged. A friendly, supportive atmosphere is maintained. If people cannot manage cross-legged, they can sit on a chair. ‘Guided meditation’ voice-overs are provided to help them along the way.

Participants learn not to be too hard on themselves. Trainers are experienced in noticing signs of distress and helping overcome it. Doubts and worries are recognized and validated, and at the same time every encouragement is given not to dwell on them but instead to focus on building the practice.

Thus nurturing is a key theme. That reflects the institutional setting — participants receive a paid service to help them overcome mental distress. It is also embedded in the theory. MBCT aims to foster approach over avoidance, terms which carry a specialist meaning here.

Consider a psychological experiment. Subjects must first trace with a pencil the unbroken path that a cartoon mouse should take through a maze; a little later, their creativity is tested. The maze puzzle is easy: nobody fails. But it is drawn in two different ways: beyond the maze is a mouse-hole, outside which is either some cheese or a threatening owl. If their picture has featured the owl, subjects score 50% lower on their creativity test. This effect is attributed to the engagement of different systems in the brain. In an evolutionary perspective, those systems are associated with two different patterns of physiological as well as behavioral functioning. Avoidance is the primordial reaction to danger: fight or flight. Mindfulness is understood to strengthen the alternative, approach mode by developing interest, curiosity, warmth and goodwill.[42]

This theoretical framework is critical. It goes beyond the model of relapse in depression and grounds the wider application of mindfulness.

[42] *The Mindful Way Through Depression* p124

The positive results of mindfulness training lend it weight. In the UK, the Mental Health Foundation issued an immensely influential report in January 2010 entitled Be Mindful[43]. It reports that: 72% of General Practitioners think it would be helpful for their patients with mental health problems to learn mindfulness meditation skills. And consequently: (37%) of General Practitioners say they sometimes suggest to patients they might benefit from learning to meditate.

Mark Williams' books are best-sellers, as were Kabat-Zinn's before. The Oxford Mindfulness Centre (OMC), which I had the privilege of founding, has gone from strength to strength

Conclusion: Perspectives

It was not just for marketing reasons that Buddhists in China came to formulate and frame the dharma in new and distinctive ways. For the potential of mindfulness, or of Buddhism generally, to be realized in a radically different culture to which it is unfamiliar (as China was then and the West is now), some 'second-stage' adaptation is needed.

This will always be a gradual process of trial and error, which will involve continual checking back against earlier incarnations of the tradition. There will also be breakthroughs, when a specific, identifiable, culturally appropriate reframing of the tradition will gain wider acceptance than earlier Buddhist formulations and practices have been able to achieve.

Clinical Mindfulness is like that. All sorts of Buddhist institutions across Europe and America are now offering MBSR or similar courses.

The development is timely. Interest in Buddhism is not growing as it used to. For instance, recruitment to UK University Buddhist Societies has been falling[44]. Also, the appeal of the Meditation Centers is no longer growing so strongly. The big figures in this movement are still from the 1960s; and, while many Centers continue to attract spiritual seekers, their expansion is hardly sufficient to meet the extent and depth of need revealed in the Mental Health Foundation report.

It is important, therefore, to consider carefully what Clinical Mindfulness offers. On that basis, it may be possible to identify how this movement is likely to develop further.

The Base

Scientific

A training system which closely parallels Buddhist meditation has emerged within a solid scientific discipline. Rigorous trials confirm both its beneficial effects and certain hypotheses as to how they arise. This clarifies the relationship of Buddhism to science.

Those involved in Clinical Mindfulness do not compare the categories which describe it to those of physics. Nor, incidentally, do they claim that all correlations between brain scans and meditative behavior are in and of themselves significant.

43 http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/be-mindful-report/

44 This was discussed at the Annual General Meeting of the Network of Buddhist Organizations this year

Instead, experimental design and statistical analysis give weight to their findings. On that basis, they are in a position to describe in unmistakable, contemporary terms truths central to the Buddhist tradition — and simultaneously to advance relevant and testable hypotheses as to the significance of neuroscience data.

Institutional

Wherever Buddhism has spread, it has sought not to replace existing belief-structures and institutions but to complement and build on them. Whilst revealed religions may have sought to sharpen distinctions between 'right' and 'wrong' structures of thought and of society, Buddhism has instead given priority to what will work in reducing suffering.

Clinical Mindfulness clearly fits that pattern. It not only offers genuine opportunities to develop mindfulness but also slots into established frameworks and so is uniquely accessible.

It is a medical intervention. So it is recognized to produce measurable benefits with a probability that is significant but limited and imperfectly predictable. The professionals who offer it are thus protected from excessive challenges and so can more easily work for their clients.

Outside of such a predefined social context, many people may find it less easy to work on themselves. If, in addition, they are presented with a practice, Buddhist Meditation, that may appear somewhat alien, the difficulty is apt to increase.

In such cases, there is a danger that newcomers may effectively be challenged to make the practice work for them or to count themselves a failure[45]. This reduces the number who can benefit. The Clinical Mindfulness approach avoids such pitfalls.

Building on the base

So it offers a sound base to build on. How to do that?

The Buddha's own approach was to operate within the existing discourse (in his case largely Brahminical). Something similar is called for now.

It may be tempting to import Buddhist doctrine wholesale, but that will not always be skillful. Instead, it is necessary to see where conventional thought/behavior has problems in its own terms, and to offer refinements that make sense in those terms.

The details are beyond the scope of a paper like this. But it is possible to identify certain perspectives that may merit further exploration.

First, it is worth noting the social structures of Clinical Psychology. The distinction between therapist and patient is sharply defined: basically, patients have a problem, therapists a solution. Among therapists, proper clinical psychologists are distinct from those with a simple certificate.

[45] It is possible to fall into this position without actually intending it. (It is also possible to adopt it consciously; then the effort is not to help people cope with suffering but to take a self-selected minority to unimagined heights.)

Among psychologists, the tone is set by the academics who do research. So, what patients are told is limited compared to what the professionals say among themselves. And that reflects the academics' inevitable concerns about how they are seen among their peers who do not work on Mindfulness. This limits the range of formulations and approaches that people will accept. For instance, there is some reluctance to generalize from the experience of mindfulness.

Thus it is central to the experience that thoughts and feelings need not be understood as 'mine', and often indeed are perhaps not best understood that way. This implies a radical revision of most people's core assumptions. But suppose that, in a discussion session on a Clinical Mindfulness course, participants seek to explore that revision. They will most likely be encouraged instead to deepen their experience of 'decentering'. This bias in favor of behavior and against language is obviously helpful at an early stage in getting people, particularly depressive patients, to focus on their practice; but in the end it is limiting.

Consider the theory of 'doing mode'. Certain linguistic-cognitive habits lock people into 'doing mode' even when it is positively damaging. These center round people's sense that the world, which is primary, consists of fixed entities, such that subjects, who are secondary, are defined by their function of manipulating those entities to measurable ends. Here again core assumptions are called into question.

It would be natural to make explicit the connection between the limitations of 'doing mode' and the understanding that flows from 'decentering'. A fuller sense of anātmā would then develop. In a long-term perspective, this would surely be in everyone's interests (including patients'). But in the short term it would be too difficult for many, so, understandably, it tends to be avoided.

Generally speaking, we can see that mindfulness undermines much basic thinking that is embedded in our modern, global culture. The theory and practice of Clinical Mindfulness are extremely helpful in illuminating this circumstance — and, at the same time, the problem remain embedded within Clinical Mindfulness itself.

After all, Clinical Mindfulness, like western Reform Buddhism, develops from a late (post-) Christian cultural context. Patterns from that context can spill over in subtle ways, which may be difficult to identify and compensate for.

Guided meditations offer a very simple illustration. They can obviously be helpful for people who need support. Equally, they can come to resemble communal prayer.

More importantly, the raisin exercise is generally understood as helping people to value the gift of sensory experience. This approach can generate a sense of gratitude and so can underpin a generally positive orientation. Equally, though, to prize sensory experience as such can also foster a certain self-exaltation, (which may compensate for — and thus entrench — an underlying sense of victimhood).

A similar issue would seem to arise in relation to self-compassion. This concept figures largely in the theoretical literature of Clinical Mindfulness. It arose initially from American Reform-Buddhist authors, who sought to address the problem of the 'inner critic' on the basis of the brahmavihāras.[46]

[46] See, e.g. Kristin D. Neff *The Development and Validation of a Scale to Measure Self-Compassion* in: Self and Identity, 2: 223–250, 2003

Of course, it is a precondition for maitrī meditation that one be able to connect with one's spontaneous liking for oneself, and with one's natural impulse to feel and do okay. Equally, though, to establish self-compassion as a distinct, explicit goal risks falling into the ātmavāda (and highlights a classically Western sense of the self as being simultaneously of overriding importance and in some way impaired, essentially an object of compassion).

The basic difficulty here would seem to be that, until the middle way is made explicit, the law of excluded middle will hold sway. Until it is understood that prīti can (and must) arise in relation to duḥkha, one is condemned to veer between grim, depressing realism and defiant, emotional positivity.

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Buddhisms in India Today: Problems and Possibilities of a Pluralistic Paradigm

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Overview

Mention "Buddhism in India" and the words conjure up a vision of Ancient glory followed by a period of decline in the Medieval period, followed perhaps by a nod towards Dalit-Buddhist leader Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the arrival of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is a decline which is a fact universally acknowledged, lamented, and then forgotten in the consoling knowledge that Buddha Dharma, while it effectively died in the land of its birth, never quite to recover its lost glory, found new and fertile ground- eastwards and westwards. Such narratives of Buddhism's history in India fail to take note of various mini-histories, yet to be written in a coherent, continuous narrative, of Buddhism's continued survival in India's remoter reaches, and its relatively recent mass-resurgence in the heart of India. This paper attempts to address these histories, tracing the major curves of this trajectory via the lives and personalities of some key protagonists and the institutions they built. It is primarily in the nature of a survey of the field, aiming at a holistic yet nuanced approach to defining the nature, scope, and challenges, of Buddhism in India today, especially in the context of claims to 'authenticity' and the claims of 'modernity.'

Theoretically, the paper also attempts to problematize the issue in terms of methodology. It considers the difficulties of periodization (when, exactly, is 'the Modern'?) and questions of definition and enumeration, especially the limitations of techniques such as census surveys, a methodology that suited the administrative requirements, first of the British Empire in India, and then of the independent Indian nation-state post 1947. It considers the complexities and contradictory twists and turns in Modern India's tryst with Buddhism, marked by the *simultaneous* presence of multiple forms of Buddhism, and the emergence of new forms that have been mediated via Buddhisms in the west and the east.

Figures as varied as the Singhala monk Anagarika Dharmapala who arrived in India and set up the Mahabodhi Society; India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, his contemporary scholar Mahapandit Rahula Sankrityayan, and charismatic leader and framer of Modern India's Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, are significant in this narrative, as well as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose arrival in 1959 initiated a new phase of Buddhist visibility. The paper takes into account how traditional Vajrayana Buddhism survives in the remote rural recesses of the border states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh and the Theravada versions of which survives in the Chittagong Hills. The dynamic twentieth century figure of Ven. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche of Ladakh, a monk-politician, is brought into focus as a neglected and little understood figure in the tapestry. Finally, the paper attempts to delineate the contested terrain of recent attempts to initiate dialogue between Buddhists of different schools and persuasions, from the urban educated Indian elite that practices various forms of 'New Age' Dharma to the followers of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.

Apart from standard scholarly works, this paper draws upon my sense of a fast changing reality which comes from a decade long association with Tibet House, New Delhi, as well as fresh materials such as the yet unpublished complete version of Autobiography of Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, on which I am currently working. Recent personal conversations and interviews with Buddhist activists and followers of different sects active in India today have helped me ground my observations in 'objectivity'. The attempt is to grasp the complex, layered, and of often contradictory meanings of the label 'Buddhism' as they obtain in the Indian scenario today. More hopefully, it is to understand the creative interventions - in the form of dialogues - that are being attempted in quiet corners towards forging a more coherent sense of a shared identity amongst Buddhists today. The challenges of these attempts highlight issues of caste, class and ethnicity in a manner unique to the Indian experience.

The Colonial Legacy: a double-edged sword?

Speaking of "Buddhist modernism", roughly placed at the end of the 19th century, Prof. Heinz Bechert argues:

> "Scholars and modern Buddhists rediscovered 'original' Buddhism as a system of philosophical thought with the sole aim of showing a way to salvation from suffering and rebirth. Traditional cosmology, the belief in miracles, and other elements which were unacceptable to a modern thinker were now identified as inessential accretions and modifications of Buddhism accumulated during its long historical development. …Therefore modernists describe Buddhism as 'the religion of reason'… In addition, Buddhist modernism in the countries of south Asia, particularly Ceylon and Burma, was linked to political and social issues from the very beginning… Anagarika Dharmapala and other Asian Buddhist leaders…described how the colonial administration had tried to destroy Buddhism, and their efforts for the revival of Buddhism were closely related to their participation in the struggle to regain national independence for their countries."[1]

In a more recent work, *The Buddha and the Sahibs*, Charles Allen delineates the crucial role of British archeologists/Orientalists in the rediscovery of Buddhism in India.[2] It is one of the ironies of colonialism that the lost glories of an aspect of the Indian past, to be later celebrated by nationalist leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, should owe their origin to the work of the British. Putting aside Edward Said's sweeping denunciation of all European intervention in knowledge formation in the colonized lands as evidence of a will to power, a strategy for domination and control, one notices that the intrepid work of these amateur archeologists literally unearthed the lost gloried of India's Buddhist past hidden under centuries of neglect and downright destruction at the hands not only of invading Turks but also of the indigenous Brahmins whose supremacy was threatened by this heterodox belief system. Allen's work is therefore seminal in shifting attention away from Islam as the foremost enemy of Buddhism in India. It also upturns some of the assumptions about the role of colonial powers vis-à-vis Buddhism in India.

[1] "Buddhist Revival in East and West", *The World of Buddhism*, Eds. Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich, London: Thames and Hudson, 1984, pp.275-276.

[2] Charles Allen, *The Buddha and the Sahibs*, London: John Murray, 2002.

While Prof. Bechert's formulation may need to be modified in the light of the above, it is undeniable that the appeal of the Buddha, to Asians, lay in the modernity of his beliefs. It also manifested itself in a desire to restore the materiality of the Buddhist heritage, in effect, introducing an identity politics. When the Singhala monk Anagarika Dharampala visited India in 1891, he took it upon himself, via the Mahabodhi Society, to free the Bodh Gaya Temple from the control of the Hindus. But his voice is essentially a voice of modernity in that Singhala nationalism drew its energies from his life and work. To the extent that discourses of nationalism and historicity are fed by 'modernity', these attempts may be seen to be deeply invested in a modernist paradigm of *being* Buddhist.

So what are implications of this paradoxical colonial legacy? That the 19th century revival of Buddhism in India should be facilitated via a combination of British Orientalist interest and the missionary zeal of a Sinhala who was opposing British colonialism in his own land, is a piquant paradox. This revival, in India, stood at odds with the hegemonic religious group, i.e., the Hindus, unlike in Sri Lanka, where the perceived threat was from Protestantism. Buddhist revival in India then had to contend with forces that were internal: the long historical legacy of Brahamanical opposition to, and subsequent assimilation of, Buddha Dharma. [3]

The Twentieth century: Early Efforts

Rahula Sankritayan: The Buddhist-Marxist Dialogue

In the twentieth century, this 'western' legacy took new forms, many of which carry the burden of this past: a fierce engagement with India's social system and its history and historiography. Mahapandit Rahula Sankrityayana's enormous contribution deserves a recall here, not least because his work is so woefully unavailable in English. Combining a commitment to the anti-imperial struggle with a socially revolutionary mission which culminated in the final embrace of Marxism, Sankrityayana's life exemplifies the contradictory pulls and pressures of Buddhist revival in India. Born a Brahmin, Kedarnath Pandey's itinerant life took him from being an orthodox Hindu *sadhu* to an Arya Samaji proselytizer, to becoming a Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka where he acquired the name he was to be known by. Returning to India, he continued to don the ochre robes even as he plunged into the nationalist movement, first with the Gandhi-led Congress, and then with the Bihar Socialist Party. This polymath managed (in disguise) to travel to Tibet thrice, bringing back with him precious manuscripts preserved there, and translating many of them en route. Increasingly drawn to Socialism, he straddled the two words - of Buddhist scholarship, having given up the robes, and of Socialist commitment - with rare skill.

His writings bear testimony to an early 20th century attempt to resurrect the Buddhist legacy as an emancipator path, which however, failed in its present manifestations to attain the goals of social justice. Space does not permit a longer deliberation on his thought, but the issues are clear: Buddhism as a rational modern system of thought that offers freedom from moribund custom and a progressive agenda, but does not quite suffice, thanks to its failure to completely address issues of deep socio-economic inequality. Buddhism for him remains status-quo-ist in character, despite

[3] For detailed discussions on these, see, Lal Mani Joshi, *Brahminism, Buddhism, Hinduism*, Kandy: Buddhist Publications Society, 1969 and Lal Mani Joshi, *Discerning the Buddha*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1982.

its enormously emancipatory philosophical foundations.[4] That Buddhist philosophy was being ultimately tested against the touchstone of a 'progressive' personal move towards Marxism is evident. Speaking on Buddhist ontology, he writes: "The criterion of being objectively active is an infallible test of reality, and there is no doubt that in it one gets an inkling of *modern* ideas…Reason is not absolute, only the objective action or experiment is the touchstone of reality. This was a big weapon but it was not used, and there was a reason for it." [5] Buddhism, despite its sophisticated dialectics and social progressivisim, remains for Sankrityayan a system that was uncomfortably a "religion", due to "belief in rebirth, yogic mysticism and some other views" to which he could not reconcile himself.

In his engagement with Buddhism, Sankrityayan represents a key aspect of modern India's tryst with the Buddha. He began with the initial hostility that the Arya Samaj propaganda instilled in him, but ironically enough, it was while studying Buddhism as an Arya Samajist proselytizer (with the intention of debunking this arch rival) that he was instead drawn to its rationality. However, it was this focus on 'rationality', along with a concern with seeing visible social and economic transformation in a deeply iniquitous social order, which ultimately also marked the limits of his Buddhist journey. It is instructive to note that the quieter, *inner* dimensions to Buddhist practice - meditation and *sadhana* - do not figure high in Sankrityayan's own life, given as it was to academic/scholarly/intellectual analysis of Buddhist ideas and their socio-political implications. Quite apart from the element of personal choice, for this remarkable and little understood polymath, who was moving towards materialism, the outer/collective *had* to be set right, before the inner/personal could be altered. It is in this context of praxis that he deserves to be read in conjunction with Ambedkar.

B.R.Ambedkar and the Dalit Converts: Past, Present and Future

Though Sankrityayan and Ambedkar were contemporaries, there are no records of any significant interaction between them. The conversation would have been fascinating, had it taken place, and recorded. One a Brahmin-Buddhist-Marxist; the other a Dalit-Buddhist. Both seriously considered Marxism along with Buddhism as an analytical tool for understanding and overcoming the problem of suffering, especially as it unfolded in the social and political scenario in India in the formative stages of the nation's modern coming into being.[6]

While Sankrityayan saw nothing wrong with supporting the Soviet experiment, keeping a studied silence on the issue of violence, the essence of their different perspectives can be gleaned from Ambedkar's concern that "The Russians do not seem to be paying any attention to Buddhism as an ultimate aid to sustain Communism when force is withdrawn… The Russians are proud of their Communism. But they forget that the wonder of all wonders is that the Buddha established Communism so far as the Sangha was concerned *without* dictatorship… The Buddha's method was different. His method was to change the mind of man: to alter his disposition…"[7]

By thus giving primacy to change in *the mind* over change in merely material conditions,

[4] "For the eradication of *economic* inequality Buddha confined his efforts to the monastic communes alone, but the abolition of *social* inequality he attempted on a universal scale…Buddhism fervently advocated the brotherhood of man without any distinction of race, country or caste." (italics mine) Rahul Sankrityayan, "Buddhist Dialectics", in *Buddhism: The Marxist Approach*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1970, pp.2-3

[5] Ibid, p.7 (italics mine)

[6] B.R. Ambedkar, *Buddha or Karl Marx* (1945), Delhi: Siddharth Books, 2009.

[7] Ibid, pp.38-9 (italics mine).

one could argue that Ambedkar was perhaps closer to the essence of Buddha Dharma. This if often forgotten in contemporarily visible forms of Ambedkarite Buddhism, where an aggressive anti-Brahminism or anti-Hinduism, combined with a singular focus on cultivating a political anger based on identity politics, appear to be the overwhelming impression conveyed to the world at large. It is worthwhile, however, to see the rehearse Ambedkar's steps here. As he writes in *The Buddha and his Dharma: "*The first distinguishing feature of his [the Buddha's] teachings lay in the recognition of the mind as the center of everything.... The first thing to attend to is the culture of the mind.... The second distinguishing feature of his teachings is that mind is the fount of all the good and evil that arises within and befalls us from without... The third distinguishing feature of his teachings is the avoidance of all sinful acts… The fourth distinguishing feature of his teaching is that real religion lies not in the books of religion but in the observance of the tenets of the religion."[8]

While mass conversion of Dalits to Buddha Dhamma was the most dramatic manifestation of Dr. Ambedkar's embracing of it, it is important to distinguish the outward ritual and demographic fact from the deeper practice of the faith.

It is true that numbers determine identity. One way of examining the question of the status of Buddhism in India today would be via the Census survey but there are two dangers in this approach. One, the numerical mode is reductive in itself as a measure of true numbers. Many Buddhists do not get counted as Buddhist because of the social stigma that still attaches to the name and often they are listed as Hindus by the census survey officials who continue to labor under the hegemonic belief that Buddhism is a branch of Buddhism. Besides, there are communities in India where multiple religious identities flourish. In the Kinnaur region of Himachal Pradesh, for instance, where ethnic Buddhists who practice Vajrayana exist, the Hindu and local animistic faiths have a residual presence in their lives. The census survey then becomes an inaccurate measure of the understanding of Buddhism's presence in India. Mass Dalit conversions also suffer from a public image of being mere gimmickry, political assertiveness and even in some cases opportunism not backed by any understanding of what Buddhism means, let alone any practice of it. Dalit intellectuals have been long lamenting the 'Hinduization' or even 'Brahminisation' as markers of upward social mobility,[9] making even converts engage in religious practices that any sociologist would describe as mixed or hybrid. The clarity that Dr. Ambedkar sought to impose upon the *distinctness* of Buddhism (as quoted above) is the first casualty of these reductive and hasty conversions. That this is not a recent 'degeneration' is testified to by an email conversation I had with Dhammachari Jeevak Gaekwad from Pune who shared the schizophrenia of his father's experience who had "embraced Buddhism a few months after" the first mass conversion: "My father threw Hindu idols into the river at that time but I remember him worshipping Ganesha, fasting on Thursdays and celebrating Hindu festivals…. It was only when I read *Buddha and His Dhamma* at the age of nineteen that I realised what it meant to be a Buddhist…" [10] Dh. Jeevak was also one of the few who acknowledged the influence of Rahula Sankrityayan, though the group to which he belongs, The Triratna Bauddha Mahasangh, steers clear of the "Marxist' in favor of a socially ameliorative model of social intervention. They run schools,

8 B.R.Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Book I, part VII, Delhi: 1956.

9 Kancha Ilaiah's thesis is that the hinduization of Buddhism, whereby the Buddha is becoming deified, and Dalits needs to recover the radical Buddha who challenged private property, caste, and gender hierarchies and believed in republics. See *God as Political Philosopher: Buddha's Challenge to Brahminism* , Kolkata: Samya, 2000.)

10 Email interview with Dhammachari Jeevak, July 4, 2011. Dhammachari Jeevak is part of one of the group that works under the guidance of Dh Subhuti, Dh Sangharakshita's disciple and 'heir' to the FWBO, that now has an Indian presence that goes beyond the traditional Dalit-Buddhist state of Maharshatra.

hospitals and pay special attention to holding meditation camps in an effort to disseminate the finer mind-training aspects of Buddha Dharma. A center such as Nagaloka in Nagpur, Maharashtra, follows the same principle and a quiet but resolute revolution is currently going on that works at a twin level: seeking to redress the deep economic and social inequalities that beset the poorest of the poor and for the more well heeled and educated Dalit–Buddhist community, an awareness and education campaign that works on the praxis of Buddhism in the form of study of key texts and meditation classes. This is a new development and bodes well for the arrival of a new form of self-aware Indian Buddhist who is worthy of best in the legacy that Ambedkar bequeathed to his community.

An even better recent development is an initiative is the beginning of *a process of dialogue* between the Ambedkarite Buddhists and the Tibetans in India, a process that has the support of Dharamsala and which some intrepid individuals like Ven. Kabir Saxena/ Sumati have attempted, first in Bodh Gaya, and now from his new base in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Earlier, Dharamsala had played host to group of Dalit Buddhists in an attempt to discuss the Ambedkarite community learning from Tibetan lamas. These are exciting and challenging experiments in bridging deep divides amongst the two claimants to the Buddhist tradition. Sociologically, the divide manifest itself in terms not simply of India's traditional caste system (from which the Dalits excluded) but also in terms of class. Ideologically, then, given Ambedkar's framing of the Buddhist question in terms of discourse of justice and modernity, this is a huge challenge since the Mahayana/ Vajrayana tradition, as we all know, exists in a pre-modern discursive space where the power of ritual, mantra, secret transmissions, and deity yoga are de riguer.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's persistent interest in reinterpreting his tradition in ways that would accord with modern scientific reason certainly prepares the ground for these conversations to take place at all. However, time will tell where this conversation goes, since questions of identity politics, and orthodoxies of various kinds, within the Buddhist communities continue to pose real challenges.

Lama Kushok Bakula: The Ladakhi Experience

But His Holiness the Dalai Lama, thought the most visible, is not the only figure in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition who has initiated dialogues across sectarian lines. It is extremely significant to share the work of the Late Lama Kushok Bakula of Ladakh, who combined in his unique and relatively unsung life many avatars. He was a member of Ladakh's royal family, an incarnate lama who was sent to Tibet to get his Geshe degree, who fought elections and became a Member of Parliament representing the extremely backward region of Ladakh, and served as India's Ambassador to Mongolia for a decade. In each of these capacities, a bodhisattva ideal was his guide. Laying great emphasis on monastic discipline and shila, he encouraged young Ladakhis to go and study Pali and Sanskrit and the Theravada tradition at institutions in central India, such as the CIHTS. He continued the practice in Mongolia, apart from spearheading a Buddhist revival in a Mongolia that saw its independence from the USSR soon upon his arrival there. [11]

[11] For details, see *My Life, My Times: The Autobiography of Kushok Bakula* (a condensed version) Ed. Maya Joshi, New Delhi: World Buddhist Culture Trust, 2006 and *Kushok Bakula Rinpoche: Saint and Statesman,* Eds Nawang Tsering Shakspo and Henry M. Vyner, New Delhi: World Buddhist Culture Trust, 2006.

Other attempts at breaking of fixed molds are represented by new phenomena like a Ladakhi choosing to embrace Theravada. Bhante Sanghasena runs an extremely dynamic institution in Ladakh that combines educational and health initiatives with teaching Vipassana as an essential component of a wholesome schooling. Ladakh, it should be pointed out, has never had any tradition of Theravada. These interdenominational mixings (I know of several Ladakhis who are keenly attending vipassana meditation classes) represents some of the more creative new alignments in the shifting space that Buddhism is occupying in India today.

Focus on the likes of Kushok Bakula and Bhante Sanghasena or the Nagpur group is significant because these are attempts at reworking a historical legacy in new light. They are all also sensitive to the social dimension of compassion, active compassion that is visible in a secular framework as well, rather than the language of interiority within which compassion often gets articulated in highly esoteric or meditative traditions.

'Elite' Urban Buddhisms

Both of the above, however, are also significantly different from some other forms of urban Buddhisms that are prevalent today in India amongst the upper middle classes. I will touch upon this with the help of two recent entries in the media. One newspaper article describes a tryst that the journalist has at the Tushita Centre in McLeodganj, Dharamshala as "Buddhism with Peanut Butter" the subtitle of which was "A seven-day course in silent meditation is buttered bliss."[12] While this speaks an imitative language of New Age 'stress buster' version of Buddhism, Vipassana meditation has acquired a wider reach. From Tihar Jail inmates to CEOs, from students to housewives, Vipassana seems to be offering a therapeutic self-help form of compassionate intervention that steers clear of identifying itself as specifically Buddhist.

A recent wave has been the Japanese Nichiren sect's Soka Gakkai International which has an India chapter called Bharat Soka Gakkai, an organization that has grown from a mere 1000 members in 1992 to its present estimated strength of 50,000 Indian members today. Registered as an educational society in 1986, it is a branch of an international formation. The primary activity consists of chanting the mantra "Om Na Mo Ho Renge Kyo", or the name of the Lotus Sutra. Embarrassingly for some Buddhists, this numerically negligible but socially powerful and visible community has increasingly come to be synonymous with being a Buddhist in metropolitan India. Members share unabashedly, in meetings and in online sites, grand stories of material success derived from the chanting.[13] I have heard it dismissed as a variety Buddhism for corporate climbers and housewives praying for upward social mobility.

While Tibet House, Delhi (the Cultural Centre for the Dalai Lama) has been holding educational classes in Buddhist philosophy at its Delhi center and deeper interdisciplinary dialogues between monastics and mainstream academics at the diasporic universities in the Southern Indian state of Karnataka on topics as varied as 'Pramana' and 'Santarakshita' institutions like the Foundation for Universal Responsibility for His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been organizing what may best be

[12] Shefalee Vasudev, "Buddhism with Peanut Butter," Eye: Sunday Magazine of *The Indian Express*, September 4-10, 2011

[13] One online success story cited "an all time high in securing advertisements" for the agency the participant works with and end the list of ten 'successes' with " a lavish hike in salary"! ("My First Four Weeks with SGI India" by Nipen Patel, Copyright, 2002, Gokkai Experiences Online.)

called interactions between Buddhist masters, including the Dalai Lama, and select educated Indians on Buddhist themes, especially in 'mind sciences'. These largely have an educated constituency, as can be imagined. Institutes such as the CIHTS, in Sarnath has gone a long way in promoting a world class culture of academic discourse, encouraging especially translation between Sanskrit and Tibetan texts. But the greater sociological impact is that their very presence in the highly Brahminical academic scene in Varanasi over the last few decades has created a new face of Buddhism in India.

More recently a new paradigm has emerged. The Deer Park Institute in Bir, not far from Dharamshala, has seen some fascinating dialogues not narrowly on Buddhism but on the wisdom traditions of Ancient India. A fascinating example of partnerships crossing all kinds of divides, this was the initiative of a group of Indians who are interrogating colonial modernity and its destruction of a long and deep indigenous tradition of study/wisdom came together and were given the space by the *Bhutanese* monk, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyenste. Deer Park has ambitions of reviving the Nalanda tradition of interdisciplinary knowledge. Even as I write this, partnerships are being sought with scholars of Chinese (from Beijing!) to revive the pre-communist Indian dialogue with China and classes at the institute can range from calligraphy to Kashmir Shaivism, from traditional teachings by eminent lamas to understanding the dynamics of Sanskrit chanting. Ecological awareness/action is part of their mandate as is an active community presence that translates compassion into recognizably benign social action. Of such stuff is the future made. Deeply Buddhist, yet curiously open, this space represents a new wave that makes Buddhists integrate in new ways with each other and the world at large.

Conclusion:

Buddhism in India today is that proverbial elephant that different blind men seek to understand on the basis of their limited exposure. "Seeing" the full glory of the noble creature requires a critical vision that rises above sectarian interests and prejudices, while acknowledging respectfully the value of tradition and lineage for each group. The space of dialogue that has opened up—between different denominations and groups within Buddhism and between Buddhist and non-Buddhists—needs to be nurtured in the best traditions of Buddhism. The future holds possibilities and challenges but one thing is I clear: India is rediscovering Buddhism through pathways that take unexpected turns and detours.

Multiculturalism and Challenges of Religion: The Place of Buddhism from a Comparative Perspective

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Introduction

Using a cultural and sociological perspective, this research paper aims to explain the place of religion which has been recognized as a 'broad-band' construct including both individual and institutional elements (Pargament 1999, Seol 2010). More specifically, it focuses on the religion of Buddhism and highlights its competing place relative to other cultures and religions in the multicultural context. The discussion is based on a research conducted in the multiethnic and multicultural context of Australia that hold people with a wide range of cultures and religions throughout the world (see Table 1). This provides a good opportunity for this paper to compare the status and success of those whose religious affiliation is Buddhism with those who belong to other religions and cultures. Further, this paper highlights the influence of the religion of Buddhism in the cultural settlement and socio-economic success of its adherents relative to competing determinants such as age composition, family formation and human capital endowments.

Since this study focuses on the status of Buddhist female immigrants from a soci-demographic and economic perspective, it is worthwhile to mention that there is a growing literature documenting the substantial influence of religion on economic and socio-demographic behavior (e.g. Lutz 1987; Lehrer 1995, 2004; Morgan et al 2002; Dharmalingam and Morgan 2004; McQuillan 2004; Foroutan 2008a, 2009a). However, the influence of religion on women's employment has received very little attention (Lehrer, 1995, 2004). Generally speaking, the influence of religion on women's market employment has mainly resulted from the fact that religion is generally considered to be associated with traditional views and values on gender roles in the household.

Key Terms Definition

In this study the term, *Buddhists*, refers to those female immigrants whose religious affiliation has been identified as Buddhism in the census. As will be explained in the next section, this religious group is mainly limited to the South East Asians. Accordingly, the term, *South East Asians*, refers to those female migrants living in Australia whose country of birth was stated as a South Asian country in the census. The United Nations' publications (*Demographic Yearbook 1999*, and *Demographic Yearbook 2003*) were used as the basis for the inclusion of South Asian countries. The focus of this analysis on Buddhism from the region of South Asia has been explained in the next section on Research Limitations.

Furthermore, this study focuses on market employment which has been asserted both as the most important determinant of a person's standard of living and lifestyle (Collins 1988) and the key indicator of migrants' settlement and success in the host country (VandenHeuvel and Wooden

1996; Bouma 1994, Foroutan 2008b). In this study, market employment is considered in the two stages: 'employment participation' and 'occupational status'. In terms of *employment participation*, women were considered either as 'employed' or as 'not employed.' Also, *occupational status* refers to the major groupings of jobs in which women have been employed. Occupational status has been classified in three levels: high level (professionals and managers), middle level (clerical, sales and service workers), and low level (laborers and manual workers).

Theory and Data

This paper is mainly based on human capital theory (Becker, 1985; Borjas, 1989; Anker, 1998) and adaptation or assimilation theory (Kossudji, 1989; Berry, 1992; Chiswick, 1993). Based on these theories, here it was hypothesized that the status of immigrants from various religious groups (such as Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Hindu, etc.) can be mainly explained by their human capital endowments and degree of integration in the destination society. This study uses educational attainment (Borjas, 1989; Chapman and Withers, 2002; Baunach and Barnes, 2003), English language competency (Desbarats, 1986, McAllister, 1986), and length of stay in the host country (Friedberg, 2000) as the main indicators of human capital and degree of integration of female migrants in the host country. With respect to the data source, this study uses special tabulations from the 2001 *Population and Housing Census of Australia* dealing with almost 5.4 million women in the main working ages (15-54). These special tabulations give matrices of relevant variables cross-classified against each other. The matrix or cell data are converted to individual records in the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) format.

Methodology

This study uses logistic regression analysis. Using logistic regression analysis, this study is mainly based on multivariate results. Before moving forward to look at the results of multivariate analysis, further information regarding the mechanism, rational and benefit of logistic regression is presented here in order to understanding the multivariate results appropriately. In fact, multivariate results go beyond descriptive and bivariate results and explain appropriately and accurately the issue under investigation (that is, the influence of the religion of Buddhism in this study). For instance, descriptive and bivariate results may show that people in particular ages have greater employment rate. But, we also need to consider the fact that a certain age group may affect other characteristics such as education and family formation of people. It is important to note that both education and family are, in turn, important factors of employment. Accordingly, when using descriptive and bivariate results, it is simply said that people in the particular ages have higher employment rate, it does not necessarily provide accurate information as it does not appropriately determine whether age or its associated characteristics (such as education and family) affect employment.

This methodological point is considered in the multivariate results using logistic regression. For example, on the basis of multivariate results, we can say that people in particular ages have a higher rate of employment while simultaneously controlling for differences in other characteristics such as education and family. Accordingly, the discussion below based on multivariate results

highlights the employment and occupational differentials by migrations status, ethnic origin and religion while other characteristics considered in the analysis are held constant. Other characteristics, here, contain human capital endowments (educational attainment and English competency), family formation factors (couple status, presence of young children at home, age of the youngest child at home, and partner's income), the length of stay in the destination country, and age composition. More specifically, we will be able to examine the effect of the religion of Buddhism and to highlight the differentials between Buddhists and other religious groups while the competing characteristics are simultaneously held constant in the analysis.

Research Limitations

It is also important to mention that this study faces the following limitations. It is basically due to the classification of the key variables in the main database used in the present analysis. This, firstly, refers to the classification of religious affiliation and particularly Buddhism. This is the consequence of the fact that the main focus in the original database was on a religious affiliation other than Buddhism. Accordingly, in order to have a relatively better coverage of Buddhists, this study has deliberately given a specific focus to South East Asian female immigrants who are more likely to be Buddhist. However, it should be noted that this issue does not apply to Table 1, which is the only source of data in this paper providing a full coverage of Buddhists population in this study.

Furthermore, this study is affected by the matter of selectivity which lies in the nature of migration: the point that the migrants compared with those who do not migrate is a complicated issue that is not considered here. For example, the case of Sri Lankan migrants provides a very clear example of selectivity. Jones (1999:1) has noted that "the Sri Lanka-born population of Australia is obviously a highly selected population compared with the population in their homeland. [For example,] there is… a heavy over presentation of the well-educated and professionals." Migrants from Malaysia, Hong Kong (Hugo, 1992), and Indians in Australia are also highly educated and a predominantly professional group (Jones, 2000; Foroutan and McDonald 2008). It is also acknowledged that the main features of migration from Asia to Australia differ across countries. For example, a high proportion of Vietnamese immigrants came to Australia largely as orphans and refugees under the humanitarian migration program during and after the Vietnam War (Hugo, 1992, 1995; McMurray, 1999; Foroutan 2008c). Filipino migration to Australia, which is dominated by females, mainly comprises family reunion migration (Hugo, 1992, 1995; Khoo, 1999; Foroutan 2008d). Many migrants from Malaysia were sponsored by a member of the family in Australia; they are skilled or business migrants or are students mostly in institutions of tertiary education (Khoo, 2000; Foroutan and McDonald 2008). Accordingly, the results of this study must be understood in the context of these research limitations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Demographic Profile

The population of Buddhist female immigrants and other religious groups is shown in Table 1. As indicated in this Table, the population of Buddhists in Australia increased markedly from 357,813 in 2001 to 418,758 in 2006. It is also evident that Buddhists are the largest religious minority followed by Muslims (2.1 and 1.7 per cent, respectively). Furthermore, Tables 2 provides more detailed information regarding the population of Buddhists included in this study. It is worthwhile restating that the demographic profile provided here must be understood based on the research limitations discussed in the previous section. According to these tables, the population of Buddhist female immigrants considered in this study is about 216,470 whose major source countries include Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1 The Population of Buddhists and other religions, 2001-2006

Religious affiliation	2001 Census	2006 Census
Christianity	69.3	63.9
Buddhism (%)	**2.0**	**2.1**
Buddhism (#)	357,813	418,758
Islam	1.5	1.7
Hinduism	0.5	0.7
Judaism	0.5	0.4
Other religion	0.5	1.3
No religion	15.8	18.7
Not stated	9.9	11.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total number	**18417159**	**19855287**

Table 2 Buddhist female immigrants and others by birthplace and religion

Grouping by Birthplace	Population	Percentage
South Asian Female Migrants	226,783	17.5
Buddhists	216,470	*95.5*
Others	6,369	*2.8*
Not Stated	3,844	*1.7*
Total	226,783	*100.0*
Migrant women from Developed Countries	631,623	48.8
Other migrant women	436,504	33.7
Native-born women	3,852,279	-
Not stated	226,106	-
Total	**5,373,295**	**100.0**
Population of Buddhists by major source country		
Thailand	12,696	9.0
Cambodia	9,853	7.0
Singapore	13,531	9.6
Viet Nam	67,087	47.7
Brunei Darussalam	759	0.5
Burma (Myanmar)	3,536	2.5
Malaysia	33,090	23.5
Total	**140,552**	**100.0**

Table 3 shows the distribution of Buddhist female immigrants in terms of the most important determinants of employment participation and compares them with both native-born and total overseas-born populations. First of all, it is evident that Buddhist female immigrants are relatively younger than the total female immigrants. In fact, approximately half of both Buddhist female immigrants and natives are younger than 35 years old (the corresponding proportion is about one-third for the whole female immigrants). Furthermore, Buddhist female immigrants contribute a relatively higher human capital. For instance, they are better educated than both natives: while one-third of Buddhist female immigrants are highly educated, the corresponding proportion for natives is relatively lower (that is, 33 and 23 per cent, respectively). This educational pattern is mainly associated with the governmental policy of skilled migration by which highly qualified people are prioritized to be accepted as immigrants.

This consequence of such governmental migration policy can be also partly observed in Buddhist female immigrants' English skill: a significant proportion of them are highly proficient in English language so that, for instance, more than half of Buddhist female immigrants can speak

English very well (55 per cent). In comparison, however, Buddhist female immigrants are relatively less proficient in English language than the whole female immigrants (the corresponding proportion for the whole female immigrants who can speak English very well is 76 per cent). Finally, in terms of duration of residence, approximately half of Buddhist female immigrants have lived in the receiving country for more than 10 years (about 60 per cent). From a comparative perspective, however, their length of residence is not as long as that for the whole female immigrants (the corresponding proportion for the whole female immigrants living in the host country is 70 per cent).

Table 3: Socio-demographic characteristics Buddhist female immigrants: a comparison

Country of birth	Buddhists	Native-born	Overseas-born
Age structure			
15-24	21.3	25.8	14.5
25-34	25.9	26.7	22.2
35-44	29.3	25.8	31.7
45-54	23.5	21.7	31.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Duration of residence			
More than 10 years	61.2		69.3
10 years or less	38.8		30.7
Total	**100.0**		**100.0**
Educational level			
Still at school	4.2	5.4	3.1
Low education	13.3	3.1	7.2
Middle	49.7	67.8	58.3
High education	32.8	23.7	31.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
English proficiency			
Not well	19.3		8.4
Well	25.6		15.2
Very well	55.1		76.4
Total	**100.0**		**100.0**

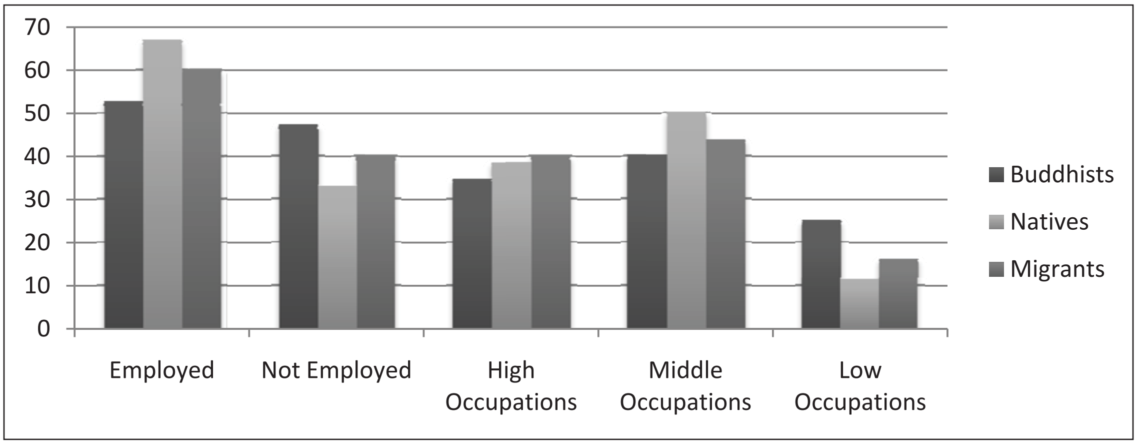
2. Buddhist Female Immigrants' Work Patterns

The following discussion highlights the main results of this study in relation to the work characteristics of Buddhist female immigrants from a comparative perspective. The preliminary findings of this analysis have been illustrated in Figure 1. According to this Figure, the following two key patterns can be addressed.

First, almost half of Buddhist female immigrants included in this analysis are employed. The corresponding proportions for the whole female immigrants and natives are about 59 and 66 per cent, respectively (see Figure 1). This employment pattern observed in the present study echoes the fact that Buddhist female immigrants are significantly less likely to be employed, as compared with both natives and the whole female immigrants.

Second, the results of this study regarding the occupational patterns of Buddhist female immigrants are also indicated in Figure 1. According to this Figure, about one-third of Buddhist female immigrants work in the high occupations (professionals and managers), approximately 40 per cent in the middle occupations (clerical, sales and service workers), and about 25 per cent in the low occupations (manual and tradespersons). These patterns differ from the occupational status of both natives and overseas-born. For instance, the corresponding proportion for natives and overseas-born working in the high occupations (professionals and managers) is about 40 per cent. Again, these patterns suggest that Buddhist female immigrants are significantly less likely to work in the high occupations (professionals and managers), as compared with both natives and the whole female immigrants.

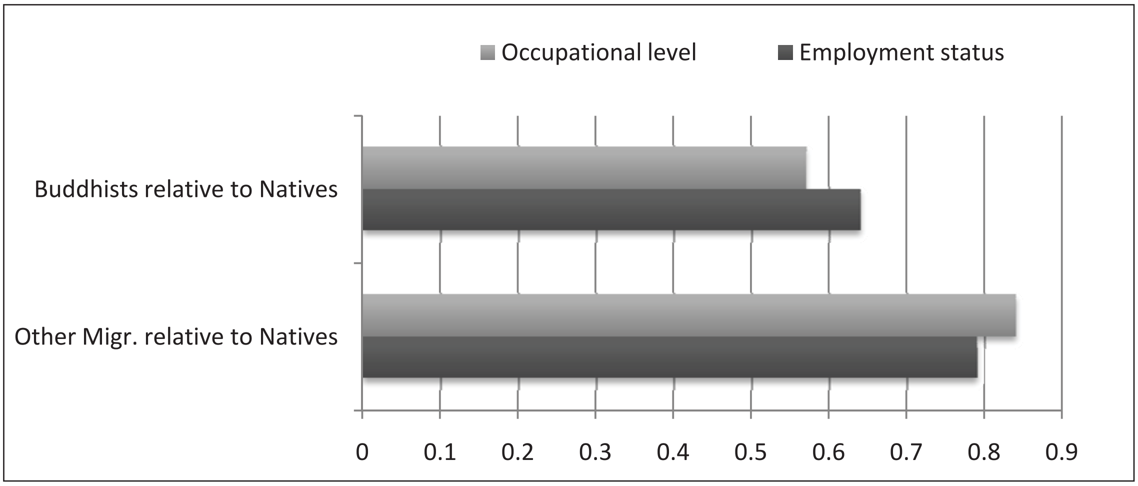
Figure 1: Buddhist Female Immigrants' Work Patterns: A Comparison (%)



It is accepted that the work patterns highlighted above for Buddhist female immigrants compared with both natives and the whole female immigrants could be partly associated with their different socio-demographic characteristics discussed before. Accordingly, the remaining discussion below is based on multivariate findings, which highlights the work differentials while simultaneously controlling for these characteristics in the analysis. The methodological advantage of multivariate findings has been fully explained before in the 'Methodology' section. The multivariate results of this study are illustrated in Figure 2. According to this Figure, three major patterns can be addressed.

First, while controlling for other competing determinants in the analysis (including human capital components, family formation, age composition, length of residence), Buddhist female immigrants still contribute a significantly lower level of employment: they are half as likely as natives to be employed. Second, almost the similar pattern applies to the second stage of labor market performance. This means that Buddhist female immigrants are also less likely to work in the high level occupations (that is, professional and managers), as compared with natives. Third, in a comparative perspective, there is a more interesting pattern: other immigrants also hold a lower level of employment relative to natives. However, their work differentials are not as significant as those for Buddhist female immigrants: the work patterns of other female immigrants tend to be almost as high as natives, which particularly applies to occupational levels. In other words, according to these patterns, it can be concluded that Buddhist female immigrants holds a lower level of employment, as compared with both natives and the whole female immigrants.

Figure 2: Buddhist female immigrants' work differentials (multivariate analysis)



3. Explanation of Work Differentials

This section explains the employment and occupational patterns highlighted in this study. The lower employment level of Buddhist female immigrants can, in part, result from disadvantage through discrimination in the labor market of the host country. According to the literature, migrant groups are "particularly vulnerable" (Evans and Kelley, 1991: 722) and are "either through individual or structural discrimination, significantly disadvantaged" (Kelley and McAllister, 1984: 400). Further, migrant women are more likely to be discriminated against in the labor market due to "the combination of their statuses as female and foreign-born" (Sorenson, 1993: 19). This can particularly apply to those who can be evidently identified in the host society because of their religious symbols. In this case, the literature also emphasizes the fact that "those ethnic groups which remain culturally distinct" (Evans and Kelley, 1986: 189) and those "persons who are visibly different" (Anker, 1998: 18) are more likely to experience disadvantage.

4. Buddhist Female Immigrants' Work Determinants

This section explains the most important factors influencing the employment participation of Buddhist female immigrants from a comparative perspective. The discussion is based on the results of this study using logistic regression. It is worthwhile restating that this method is also advantageous for this study because of the fact that determinants associated with migrants' market employment (i.e. English skill, length of stay in the destination country, educational attainment and birthplace) were found to be noticeably correlated (e.g. Evans, 1984; Wooden, 1994; McAllister, 1995; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1996, 1999; Khoo and McDonald, 2001; Foroutan, 2011). Accordingly, this discussion explains the effect of each factor while simultaneously controlling for other factors included in the analysis.

The results discussed here are illustrated in Table 4. According to this Table, it is evident that English proficiency tends to play an important role in the employment status of Buddhist female immigrants: sitting well with prior research asserting English skill as a key that "opens the door to a wide range of socio-economic and cultural possibilities for the migrant" (McAllister, 1986: 24), the results of this study also show that the higher the English proficiency, the greater the employment level. This can also be in part explained by cultural distance and the fact that English proficiency counts as a basic indication of cultural assimilation/adaptation (e.g. Desbarats, 1986; McAllister, 1986; Berry, 1992; Baubock, 1996; Foroutan, 2009b). Here, then, those groups of Buddhist female immigrants whose English skill is higher tend to be more assimilated with the gender dynamics of the host culture; for example, higher rates of women's work outside the home. In addition, generally speaking, the employment status of Buddhist female immigrants is significantly associated with educational attainment. In accordance with the literature identifying education as "a significant predictor of women's employment" (Read, 2004: 55), the results of this study show that highly educated women are significantly more likely to be employed than those with lower levels of education. However, the employment status of both Buddhist female immigrants and the whole female immigrants is not as significant as that of natives benefitting from educational attainment. This migrant–native difference is partly explained by the fact that overseas qualifications, particularly those obtained from non-English-speaking countries, have been observed to have a lesser economic benefit relative to Australian schooling because they are more likely to be unrecognized and less valued in Australia (e.g. Evans and Kelley, 1986; Iredale, 1988; McAllister, 1995; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1996; Foroutan, 2011).

Table 4 Buddhist Female Immigrants' Work Determinants: A Comparison (multivariate analysis)

Characteristics	Buddhists	Native-born	Overseas-born
Age groups			
15-24 years	*	*	*
25-34 years	2.51	1.39	2.13
35-44 years	2.25	1.36	2.28
45-54 years	1.66	1.01	1.80
Level of education			
Low education	*	*	*
Still at school	0.59	1.15	0.54
Middle education	1.55	3.66	1.68
High education	3.15	10.54	3.14
English proficiency			
Not well	*	*	*
Well	1.94	1.36	1.76
Very well	2.52	1.94	3.53
Duration of residence			
Born in Australia			*
More than 10 years	2.24		0.95
10 years or less	*		0.50
Presence & age of young child at home			
0-2 years	*	*	*
3-7 years	1.79	2.17	2.00
8 years or more	3.10	4.33	3.83
No young children	4.05	6.83	4.74
Partner's annual income & Couple status			
$ 20,799 or less	*	*	*
$ 20,800-36,399	2.32	1.94	2.19
$ 36,400 or more	1.92	1.92	1.93
No partner	0.91	0.96	1.08

Finally, the results of this study indicated in Table 4 show that the presence of young children at home and the age of the youngest child have a very significant effect on the employment status of Buddhist female immigrants in the present analysis. The results show two main patterns: (i) those with no young children at home hold the highest level of employment; (ii) amongst Buddhist female immigrants with young children at home: the younger the child, the lower the employment level. This provides empirical evidence to support the fact that the age of the youngest child has "possibly the most important single influence on female participation" in the labor market (Brooks and Volker, 1985: 74). It is, however, evident that the employment status of native-born women is more strongly affected by these family characteristics compared with that of both Buddhist female immigrants and the whole female immigrants. This pattern accords with prior studies (e.g. Evans, 1984; Stier and Tienda, 1992; Yamanaka and McClelland, 1994; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1996; Wooden and VandenHeuvel, 1997; Foroutan, 2008b) which have observed that the employment of natives is more significantly more associated with family, compared with female migrants particularly from non-English-speaking countries, which also tends to apply to the status of Buddhist female immigrants in this study.

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Bringing Meditation to the Community: The Applied Meditation Studies Program at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies, Glenside, PA., USA

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Meditation is not to escape from society, but to come back
to ourselves and see what is going on. Once there is seeing,
there must be acting. With mindfulness,
we know what to do and what not to do to help.

--Thich Nhat Hanh

The Won Institute of Graduate Studies opened its doors in 2002 in Glenside, Pennsylvania with the mission "to provide quality graduate-level professional education and training in the practical applications of spirituality and the healing arts for the well-being of individuals and society."[1] It is a small, quasi-experimental school, with only 6 full-time faculty and total enrollment of about 75 students. The Institute includes as its goals excellence in teaching, learning and research; to become a center in the United States for education and research in Won Buddhism; to develop as a center for education and research in the professional application of meditative and contemplative practices; to educate students to become qualified acupuncture practitioners; and, to create an institutional environment committed to excellence and integration of assessment into Institute policies and practices. It is the third goal of the Institute, that is, "to develop as a center for education and research in the professional application of meditative and contemplative practices" that is the focus of the program in Applied Meditative Studies and that will be the focus of this paper.

The Applied Meditation program, leading to an accredited Master's degree (MAMS) is the only program of its kind in the nation (and perhaps the world) that prepares individuals to bring meditation into the community and that offers them a degree qualification in this field. The Institute also offers an abbreviated course of study leading to a certificate in Applied Meditation Studies for students who do not wish to pursue the entire program. The program emphasizes the practice of meditation grounded in a deep, non-sectarian understanding of the foundations of Buddhist thought and Buddhist psychology. Our students come from a variety of professions, including education, music, nursing, mental health, medicine, business and others. Many, though not all, enter the program with well-developed meditation practices already established. The goal of the program is to graduate individuals prepared and able to design and implement meditation programs for a wide range of institutions in society. The program stresses the creativity of the students and the philosophy that meditation grounded in ethics and wisdom offers innumerable benefits to all individuals. We are

[1] The Won Institute of Graduate Studies Catalogue, 2010, p. 6.

especially interested in encouraging the teaching of meditation to populations that generally are not exposed to the practice of meditation in their regular lives. While the more commonly understood meaning of "socially engaged Buddhism" stresses the involvement of Buddhists in the world of politics, economics, ecological and social issues, there is a secondary sense of the term that points to the contribution that can be made through direct practice with individuals. As Donald Rothberg has written, "…it may be in making more available to the larger society a sense of socially engaged spiritual practice that socially engaged Buddhists will make their greatest contribution. In developing further and making more accessible the practice of ethics, meditation, and wisdom, socially engaged Buddhists can help respond to immediate suffering as well as to deeper structural problems, and complement the resources of other traditions and approaches."[2] It is in this sense of the term "socially-engaged Buddhism" that our program is designed to make a contribution towards the improvement of individual's lives.

This is a two-year program (33 credits) for those students choosing to pursue their studies full-time. As noted above, we also offer an 18-credit certificate program which requires a public presentation but does not require the practicum. So far our students have designed and implemented meditation programs for parent and child groups (together), for adolescent high school students in an alternative school, for disadvantaged children in after-school programs and for corporate America. We have students in the process of bringing meditation to homeless individuals in Philadelphia and military veterans. Of course, we continue to work with students who bring meditation into areas of mental health, a flourishing territory in the U.S. for the introduction of meditation as an adjunct to traditional treatment. Our program provides a broad examination and study of Buddhist thought and practice, which includes the reading and examination of suttas, the regular practice of meditation, a close exploration of Buddhist psychology as well as a year-long practicum in which students design (semester 1) and then implement (semester 2) their program for introducing meditation to a population that is new to the practice. It is the departmental as well as the Institute's philosophy, that the applications of meditation extend as far as human culture, including its potential application as a teaching tool, as an aid to conflict resolution, as a supplement to hospital and/or hospice care, in the business world, in politics, in consumer education and more. There is increasing scientific research to suggest that meditation has deep and lasting effects on the practitioner's cardiovascular and central nervous systems, brain function and overall physical health.[3] By relaxing the body and calming the mind, meditation effectively diminishes the harmful effects of tension, stress and disquiet.

The remainder of this paper will present an overview of the program as well as report on the completed projects and in-progress projects of our current student body. I will examine some of the difficulties we have encountered in attempting to introduce meditation to the general population and how the program has and continues to adjust to the obstacles we have met. It has been our great privilege to have the opportunity of working with enthusiastic, committed and highly motivated students who perceive the untapped potential of meditation for both the individual and society as a whole.

[2] Rothberg, D. p. 285.

[3] See, for example, "Mindfulness Meditation Training Changes Brain Structure in Eight Weeks", Science Daily, Jan. 21, 2011.

Overview of Program in Applied Meditation Studies

The 33-credit program leading to a Master's in Applied Meditation Studies (MAMS) is designed as a two-year fulltime program, though many of our students extend the length of time they complete the program for personal, i.e. family and work-related, reasons. All courses are offered evenings and weekends as the program is designed primarily for working professionals who are already established in their careers. With regard to knowledge-based objectives, our students are expected to gain a theoretical understanding of both the Buddha's system of meditation and of various other systems of meditation developed both within and outside Buddhism; to develop a theoretical understanding of the foundational teachings of the Buddha, and the history and development of Buddhist perspectives and teachings; and to understand how meditation affects the physical, emotional and mental aspects of human beings. In terms of skills, we expect our students to become skilled in the practice of meditation; to be able to assess individuals' prior experience and meditative needs in order to design appropriate training; to demonstrate the ability to train others in meditative practice; to develop the ability to provide ongoing consultation regarding meditative practice; and to be able to design and deliver meditation-oriented programs in, and appropriate to, a variety of settings. This last goal is the "bottom-line" expectation, i.e. that students gain the ability and confidence to bring meditation into the community and to segments of the population which otherwise would probably not be exposed to meditation and it's application to their lives.

Description of Program

As noted above, the MAMS degree consists of 33 credits of coursework, meditation and practicum. Students take four semesters of sitting meditation, a 50-minute practice session with little or no meditation instruction. For meditation instruction, the students take 2 three-hour courses, Meditation I and II. In these courses the students practice meditation with the instructor present for approximately 1½ hours, followed by a didactic period in which they analyze and discuss the Anapanasatti Sutta (Meditation I) and the Satipatanna Sutta (Meditation II). During their first year, they also take a course entitled "Applications of Meditation to the Individual and Society", which introduces them to some of the ways in which meditation is currently being applied in social institutions. During this course they learn about the application of meditation in prisons (and they watch two excellent videos on this subject: "Doing Time and Doing Vipassana" about the introduction of meditation into India prisons and "The Dhamma Brothers" about the introduction of meditation into a prison in the US), as well as how meditation is being used in hospice care, mental health settings, alcohol abuse programs, and others. In addition, during the first year the students take a course entitled "What the Buddha Taught", that explores the central teachings of Siddhattha Gotama and the foundational suttas of classical Buddhism. The year is rounded out with two semesters of moving meditation taught by a Won Buddhist Tai Chi master.

During the second year, students continue with both sitting and moving meditation. In addition they take a course in Buddhist Psychology, which looks at all aspects of the Buddhist perspective on human behavior and interaction and they take a course in Teaching Meditation as well. During the summer, and for the following summer, students attend a summer retreat – either one that the department offers consisting of 30 hours of meditation during a one week period, or another retreat of their own choosing taking place outside of the Institute but has been approved by

the department faculty. They are required to attend a minimum of four "Sunday Sanctuaries" – each a three-hour meditation and discussion session on Sunday mornings. Finally, it is during the second (or final) year of the program that students develop their practicum project, which consists of the design and implementation of a program in meditation with a specific population in mind. It is in this final project that students will demonstrate their ability to synthesize the material they have been studying. This project will culminate in a public presentation, for faculty, students and anyone from the community who wishes to attend, of their project and their assessment of the project. This presentation helps the student evaluate and put into perspective the work they have done in the field.

The program aims to be intensive, providing grounding in Buddhist theory, but with the ultimate goal of training practitioners who will use their skills to bring meditation into the community. Glenside, Pennsylvania is a suburb of Philadelphia, a city of 1½ million people, with diverse populations of rich and poor, well-educated and under-educated, religious and atheistic. The program does not proselytize for any particular school of Buddhist thought, though it does view meditation as a practice grounded in wisdom and theory. In this way we differentiate ourselves from some programs that use meditation solely as a technique for relaxation and stress reduction.

Completed Projects

Bringing Meditation to an Alternative High School

Our student G. was a school guidance counselor at an alternative high school in Philadelphia who had begun a second career after retiring from the local police force. Prior to entering the program, G. had discovered meditation independently, having done some reading in Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (Jon Kabat-Zinn) and had initially offered an elective in meditation to the students at his school. When he enrolled at the Won Institute, he had the express interest in learning more about meditation and finding ways to incorporate meditation practice into his deeply troubled students lives.

An alternative high school is a learning center for children who have not been able to succeed in regular high school classes. Some of these children have serious addictions, including alcohol, marijuana and even heroin. They may come from homes in which their parents or parent are seriously addicted and impaired in their ability to provide guidance to the child. These are children with police records, hospital admissions (for suicide and/or depression) and poor academic histories.

G. had found that there was some interest in meditation in his school among both students and teachers. One of his initial ideas was to move his efforts from a student-only approach to a whole-school approach. With that in mind, he initiated meditation for the staff, believing that there would be more support for the student meditation sessions if the staff understood and participated in meditation themselves. He started staff meditation sessions twice a week, Tuesday mornings before classes began and Thursday afternoons after school had adjourned. He also continued to offer his initial elective meditation class, which includes sitting meditation, walking meditation, yoga, body scan, and small group discussion. Then he added one "pull-out" group (meaning that some students were "pulled out" of their regular class session to participate) consisting of 8 – 12 students on Thursday mornings. Understanding that students may need time and gentle exposure to be open to learning

meditation skills, he developed a program called "Mindful Minute", in the homerooms in order to introduce students to meditation. For 1 – 3 weeks, G. practiced in the classroom with the teacher present and then he turned over the "mindful minute" to the teachers to incorporate into their day. Most recently, at the request of the students, he added an ongoing Check-in/Home room. Students are making a commitment to come to his room each morning and sit in meditation at the start of the day for approximately 15 minutes or longer. This program was initiated to meet a need expressed by the students and has been progressing well. There are five committed meditators attending this special homeroom each day. As evidence of their involvement, the students showed up one morning when G. was unable to attend (they had not been advised that he wouldn't be there). As it turns out, however, the five meditating students went in to the classroom anyway, set up the cushions, meditated on their own, put the cushions away and went to their next period class without an issue.

Finally, G. recently wrote and was the recipient of a $1000. award for the meditation program at his school. He used the grant proceeds to buy meditation cushions as he had been using old couch cushions that he had brought from his home. Staff members at the school donated as well to this purchase.

Bringing Meditation to Acupuncture Students

In 2010, one of our students, who is also a Won Buddhist Minister, was commuting to our program from Houston, Texas. She decided to develop a meditation program based on the Satipatthana Sutta for students at a local college, the American College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in Houston. The American College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine is a post-baccalaureate academic institution that trains individuals as healthcare practitioners based on the theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The school is committed to providing the local community with affordable healthcare through its clinic while promoting the integration of TCM into mainstream Western medicine. This student was also interested in exploring methods of meditation other than what she herself had trained in, i.e. Won Buddhist meditation. She had been captivated by the examination of the Satipatthana Sutta in her meditation class and decided to use it as the foundation of her program with the acupuncture students at ACAOM.

Very briefly, Rev. S. developed 14 steps of practice based on the Satipatthana Sutta. These steps consisted of: present moment awareness with breathing, full attention in activities, observing the reality of the body, releasing the notion of "my body", immediate knowing of whatever appears, waking up the senses, moment to moment contemplation, direct awareness of mind, letting go, the five hindrances, insight into no-self, right meditation and changing one's way of life. Each step was explored through a combination of presentation (what the student called "narration"), sitting meditation, sometimes walking meditation and sharing. Rev. S. also remained cognizant of a wish to adapt Won Buddhism to American culture so that more Americans might be interested in exploring the possibilities that Won Buddhism offers. With that in mind, she surveyed Won Buddhist ministers from among 20 Won Buddhist temples in order to elucidate if and how meditation is being taught at those temples around the country. One of her findings was that 77% of the ministers she surveyed did not think that Won Buddhist meditation was well-structured for Westerners. It was a hope for her that in adapting the Satipatthana Sutta through the lens of Won Buddhism she might develop a method of teaching meditation that would both appeal to Westerners and interest them in further

discovering the possibilities inherent in Won Buddhism. At the end of 10 weeks, participants in the program reported that they could understand and experience greater tranquility and present-moment awareness.

Current Projects

Meditation with Military Veterans

One of our current projects has been designed by our oldest student, a veteran himself, who has had concerns about the mental health of veterans and the scarcity of services available for men who have served their country and now are suffering the scars that military service left on their psyches. The program is called “Meditation in Transition” and is a 24-week program, divided into three stages of 8 weeks each. Each meeting will include meditation as well as a period of discussion focused around a topic chosen by the student, or “guide”.

Stage One introduces the practice of meditation. Members will meet once a week with the “guide” (student) and will learn the basic concept of focusing on the breath. They will also be introduced to journaling as a method of record-keeping that will follow them throughout the 24 week program. Groups will be limited to six individuals in order to insure that individual attention can be provided to each participant.

Stage Two builds on the first stage by introducing more advanced meditation skills. These skills include concentration, alert poise, identifying difficulties, investigating with curiosity, etc. Discussion will focus on clarifying awareness as well as on expressing feelings and recognizing their patterns.

In Stage Three, the “guide” will lead the participants in discussion (in addition to continued meditation) for the purpose of identifying individual aspirations that participants have been unaware of or unable to actualize. This program is built upon the assumption that veterans often have abandoned their wishes and dreams and live compromised and unfulfilled lives. As the student says in the brochure he designed as a tool for recruiting veterans to his program, “The gist of the MIT program for each person is to decisively ‘take on my life – come hell or high water!’ And to do this with the intent to Envision and Realize the maximum possibilities each member can identify.”

This program is now in the recruitment stage. As we have a special “veterans clinic” in the acupuncture clinic at the Won Institute, this student is taking advantage of the already available veteran population as an avenue for offering his program. He is “hanging around” the clinic, meeting and talking informally with the men (there have only been men attending the clinic so far) and building relationships as a means to interesting them in starting this new endeavor.

Meditation with the Homeless

S. is one of our Korean students who decided to create her practicum around bringing meditation to the homeless. She located a site at St. Vincent’s Hospital, one of the first hospitals in Philadelphia, opening its doors in 1875. The hospital’s mission is to make available a “community

of caregivers dedicated to bringing God's healing love to all and committed to compassion and excellence in the delivery of a continuum of wholistic care."[4] In the health center, all visitors and guests are homeless individuals. They come to the center to receive their meals and sometimes their welfare checks and health care. The clinic offers regular health care checkups, foot massage, and other services as needed. Volunteers are trained by the health center to offer services as well.

Through a personal contact, S. was able to arrange to offer meditation classes for the homeless at St. Vincent's. She developed an eight-week program consisting of walking meditation, sitting meditation, sharing feelings and emotions and offering tea. Initially she had a low turnout because the weather on the first day of her program was clear and sunny. She had been advised that on days of good weather many of the regular visitors would not show up, as they enjoyed being outside and watching the world go by; however, she recruited interested individuals from whoever was there and started her program with six people. After meditation S. introduced the participants to a Korean-style tea service, which she felt was enthusiastically enjoyed!

Three weeks later S. led her second meditation session at St. Vincent's. Two participants who had attended the first session returned for the second session and three individuals came for the first time. One of the homeless men reported to her that he had been looking forward to the meditation all week. S. discovered for herself at the second session that she needed to set aside her preoccupation with the participants' "homelessness" and simply relate to them as human beings experiencing their own forms of suffering. Once again the one-hour session consisted of sitting meditation, walking meditation, discussion and tea. She introduced the participants to the concept of present-moment awareness and they compared the experience of "mindful" walking to their usual "unmindful" walking. Other topics for future meetings include the four postures, full attention, consideration of body parts, consideration of the four elements and awareness of all sensations. With ten sessions planned altogether, the group decided together to meet on a monthly basis for the remainder of the sessions. We will have to wait for the final report!

Difficulties Encountered in the Practicum Program

The major difficulty we have encountered in implementing programs of meditation in the community is the problem of time. We have learned that convincing the community that it is worth their while to try meditation can take more time than previously anticipated and may not fit into the rigid semester time frame that an academic program establishes. To this end, we have opted for flexibility and support for continued effort.

For example, in 2010 we had a student who entered the program with the hopes of establishing meditation groups for mothers and children together. T. owned her own thriving business at the time, offering music education to the community which included groups for mothers and children singing, dancing, and otherwise making music together. It was her hope to develop meditation groups along the same lines.

[4] www.saintvincenthealth.com

The student developed an 8-week program for mothers and children to meditate together. A talented and resourceful young woman, T. was creative in her approach, developed eye-catching and inspiring marketing materials, and scouted out a number of possible venues for her group. However, she was unable to generate enrollment for any of the groups she offered. It was a very discouraging and difficult time for her as she struggled to get a first group off the ground. As a result, by the end of the semester and her expected graduation, T. had a wonderful program "on the books" but had been unable to actualize it in the real world. We graduated her anyway, appreciating the hard work she had put in to develop this idea.

Then something unexpected occurred. Shortly after graduation, we started receiving emails at the Institute inquiring about meditation groups for parents and children. Some folks had apparently heard that we were offering such a group and they were seeking additional information. We happily relayed the inquiries to our student and within about one month she had started her first group consisting of four parent/child pairs. The world has its own schedule!

In addition to the time issue, as the instructor and mentor to the practicum students I have had to repeatedly remind students to "do less". Our students tend to be bright, committed, and enthusiastic, and sometimes have difficulty adjusting their expectations to the population being served. Since many of the projects target populations with no prior experience with meditation, I believe that it is essential for our students to begin small and build on success. They need to speak the language of the population they are serving as well as adapt their program to what is realistic for the individuals involved. This often means that the goals we set in the practicum are repeatedly revised so that they are not overwhelming for the individuals involved. I find myself saying the same words over and over, "Do less, do less, do less..."

In conclusion, in this paper I have presented an overview of the Applied Meditation Studies Program at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies, including examples of some of our students' projects for taking meditation out into the world. The Applied Meditation Studies Program is continually growing and changing. This current year we have five new students with their own unique and exciting ideas for bringing meditation into the community. We have an incoming student who has been working with court-ordered men with anger issues. He hopes to develop a program on meditation for anger-management. Another new student is interested in bringing meditation into the corporate world.

We are excited to be doing this work, and hope that in describing our work to others we might inspire other programs like ours. There are so many possibilities, so many populations who could benefit from meditation. Our students intuitively seem to know this, and are constrained only by the limited range any human being struggles with. If only we could do more!

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Towards Opening the First Theravada Center in Spain

Ricardo Guerrero

Spain. A socio-political portrait.

Spain, also named Kingdom of Spain, is a sovereign country, member of the European Union and one of the most ancient countries in Europe. It is constituted as a social and democratic state based on the rule of law and its form of government is a parliamentary monarchy. King Juan Carlos I is the current monarch and head of state since he ascended the throne in 1975.

Its territory, with the capital in Madrid, occupies most of the Iberian Peninsula at the western end of the European continent, to which is added the Balearic Islands (in the western Mediterranean Sea) and Canary Islands (in the northeastern Atlantic Ocean) and two autonomous cities in northern Africa.

Spain covers an area of just over half a million squared kilometers, being the fourth largest country in the continent after Russia, Ukraine and France. With an average altitude of 650 meters is one of the most mountainous countries in Europe. According to 2011 municipal census, it has a population of more than 47 million inhabitants.

It is also the ninth country with the highest percentage of immigrants within the EU, behind countries such as Luxembourg, Ireland, Austria and Germany. In 2005, Spain received 39% of non-European immigration to the EU, mainly Latin Americans, citizens of other countries in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and the African Maghreb. As of 2009, 12% of the resident population is of foreign origin, with a greater number of Romanians, Moroccans and Ecuadorians. Citizens of the European Union represent 40.5% of all foreign nationals.

Spain is, by its nature and its history, a country accustomed to multiculturalism. The percentage of immigrant population, just mentioned, hasn't caused any social tension. The coexistence between people of different nationalities, races and religions has developed in an absolutely natural and smooth way.

Economy.

Spain is currently the world's twelfth largest economy, ahead of South Korea, but in the recent past, it has been the seventh as per its nominal GDP. The Spanish economy is one of the most open in the Eurozone. Moreover, according to the 2010 report of the UN, Spain has a human development index of 0.878, the twenty-third largest in the world, ahead of other major European countries such as Italy, United Kingdom and Greece.

Spain has traditionally been an agricultural country and is still one of the largest producers of Western Europe, but since the mid 1950's industrial growth was rapid, and soon it reached a greater weight than agriculture in the economy. However, the most important Spanish industry is, undoubtedly, the tourism industry of goods and services.

According to the World Tourism Organization, Spain is the second country in the world in receiving foreign tourists, just behind France, and enjoys a market share of 7% of world tourism, ahead of the United States and Italy.

Between January and December 2006, it received a total of 58.8 million foreign tourists -4.5% more than in the comparable period last year-. According to forecasts by the World Tourism Organization, the arrival of foreign tourists to Spain will grow an average of 5% annually over the next twenty years, which makes it likely that Spain will receive 75 million foreign tourists in 2020, almost 20 million more than it did in 2005.

Spanish Language

According to the Spanish Constitution, Spanish is the official language and the most widely spoken one in the whole country. Spanish may be alternatively labeled Castilian as a reference to the ancient kingdom of Castile, within which it had its origin.

The estimated number of speakers around the world ranges from 450 to 500 million people. After Mandarin Chinese, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world by the number of people who are native speakers, and third if you count those who speak it as a second language. In the future, it's expected to become the second international communication language after English. At present, Spanish is the second most studied language after English.

In addition to Spain, Spanish is the official language of nineteen countries in America and two in Africa, Equatorial Guinea and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Nevertheless, it's spoken on five continents. In the United States is widely used, being the second most spoken language after English in addition to being the official language in a territory: the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In 2009, the number of Spanish speakers in the U.S.A. was 35.4 million.

Spanish is a language clearly growing. The worldwide interest in Spanish is because people are realizing the growing importance of this language in the West. In addition, it has the advantage that it used in many different countries. On the other hand, in a scenario of global economic crisis, it is important to note the economic strength and dynamism of Latin America where they are producing a lot of growth opportunities in areas of very different nature while there is a rapid evolution and cultural development.

Several studies suggest that the economic value of Spanish in Spain is estimated at 15.6% of GDP. Today, three and a half million people have jobs directly related to Spanish. Factors of economic value itself are language teaching, industry and cultural publications.

In this regard, and in advance of what we'll discuss later, we should note the limited specialized Buddhist literature published in Spanish and translated into that language from

the original canonical texts. Certainly, we need to note this gap while we notice a clear opportunity. The Spanish language must become a major vehicle for the expansion and teaching of Dhamma around the world at the same level as it has been, until now, the English language.

The characteristics of the Spanish language, compared with other languages, make it a very suitable language with a huge potential to reflect the subtleties and depth of Buddhist philosophy and the accuracy of the Buddha's words.

Religion in Spain.

In the last thirty years, the Spanish situation has evolved in all areas of society. This development was reflected in a special way with regard to religious beliefs and practices, thereby directly affecting the Catholic Church, one of the pillars of history and identity in Spain.

The causes identified as part of the change in religion are many, gaining nowadays significant weight globalization and migration. These two processes have led to both cultural diversity and multiplicity of faiths. The result is a complex and disparate religious phenomenon.

Certainly, Spanish society is not homogeneous and there can be found positions ranging from Catholic religious conservatism to agnosticism away from any religious manifestation. In this context, Madrid represents an intermediate position regarding the presence of the Catholic religion. As the state capital, Madrid has great migration, cultural diversity and confessions that identify it as cosmopolitan and inclusive. This implies an attitude of openness, moderate and adaptive population to social change. The vibrancy and dynamism of the city makes difficult the persistence of absolute "truths" and permanent dogmas.

Article 16.3 of the current Spanish Constitution defines the country as a secular State: "No religion shall have a state character." However, it guarantees freedom of religion and worship of individuals and ensure cooperative relations between public authorities and all faiths.

A study by the Spanish Center for Sociological Research conducted in 2010 showed that 75% of Spanish people were considered Catholics, atheists or unbelievers accounted for 21.3%, and 1.6% were attached to another religion. However, practitioners' percentage is much lower: only 18% of the Spanish people go to church regularly. Among those under 30 years old, that percentage drops to 14%.

As for the religion of the Spanish youth, a January 2012 study of the same institution reveals that 42.5% of those aged 18 to 24 say they are not Christian or atheist, indicating the decline of population's religiosity, which, in the context of Spain, also means the decline of the Catholic religion.

The Spanish Ministry of Justice grants to some religions the status of "deeply rooted religion". Besides Catholicism, the following ones have this character: (in order of agreement): Protestantism, Judaism, Islam (all since 1992), Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Buddhism, the latter accepted in 2007.

Buddhism in Spain.

Buddhism in Spain has a long history, but, as just mentioned, has only been recognized as a “deeply rooted” religion in the fall of 2007. This recognition makes it equal to the other religions in all respects, in the legal, political and administrative fields.

The Spanish came in contact with Japanese Buddhists when some Jesuit missionaries settled in Japan and China in the sixteenth century. By then St. Francis Xavier and, somewhat later, the superior of the mission in Japan, Cosme de Torres, wrote some reports about the new discovered religion and its priests, the monks. They say that it is a “predominant religion” and they point out some features, such as long meditations of Zen monks and how devilishly difficult it was to “refute their arguments.”

In Spanish Buddhism, the faithful are called “students of dhamma” or simply “students” and their meeting places “centers of study”. In Spain, the first research center opened in 1977 in Barcelona and belongs to a Kagyu lineage, Karma Kagyu of Tibetan Buddhism, promoted by the teacher Akong Rinpoche.

That same year it started to run the Zen Doyo in Seville, launched by a disciple of Taisen Deshimaru. In 1977 the lama Thubten Yeshe comes to Ibiza, a master of charisma that excited people who had never heard about this religion which is primarily a philosophy. That drove the creation of centers of all traditions: Zen, Tibetan schools, Theravada, Triratna Buddhist Order (formerly Western Buddhist Order), and so on, in many places in Spain.

Later, they were creating monasteries, temples and retreat centers at selected sites and generally away from big cities to facilitate the best conditions for its practice.

The lot of them have been mixed, with some closed after several years of activity and others have come down to us with force.

One of the most important in Spain, with more than ten centers attached to it, is Dag Shang Kagyu. It was founded in 1984 in Northern Spain by former Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche, linked to the Kagyu lineage Shangpa Dagpo and Vajrayana Buddhism. The center is run by the spiritual authority of Ven. Drubgyu Lama Tenpa and is home to approximately eight Lamas, Western, Tibetan and Bhutanese, as well as several residents and staff that come from different parts of Spain and other countries.

There are also meeting places and temples of the Chinese and Japanese immigrants who do not mix, so far, with Spanish practitioners.

Since 1991, the Federation of Buddhist Communities of Spain is working as the official representatives of Buddhism in Spain before the government and society. It is estimated that in Spain there are about 40,000 registered centers related to Buddhism, about 65,000 practitioners, and adding those sympathetic to Buddhism, their number would reach 300,000 people. Those centers belong mainly to Zen and Tibetan traditions. The Theravada tradition doesn’t have any study center in Spain and is only represented by a very few Vipassana meditation centers.

Theravada Buddhism in Spain

From the foregoing, several conclusions can be drawn. First, we can find in Spain a phenomenon similar to other Western countries in the development and spread of Buddhism, but with some particular tones.

Well known are the theories that analyze the different trends of the phenomenon of expansion at the time that allows for a classification of the different Buddhist groups that have formed in Western countries. The first group are called “elite Buddhist” consisting of Western people who have actively sought Buddhism by going to their sources or having a proactive attitude towards the Dhamma. The second group is the “Buddhist missionaries” formed by groups from Asian countries seeking converts among the Western general population. The third and last group is the one of “ethnic Buddhists” who practice Buddhism as part of their cultural or ethnic heritage.

This model can be applied to societies like the American or British and, with some exceptions, also to the Spanish society.

The so-called “elite Buddhists” are those who feel attracted to Zen meditation, Tibetan Vajrayana practice and Vipassana meditation, but are not looking for a religion of faith and devotion, or expand their social circle with other people to whom are only linked by a match in beliefs. This approach takes place in an intellectual way, so that their involvement does not usually get to bring a deep commitment. Most of them are trying to get away from the religions based on faith and devotion as Christianity or Judaism. Many are disappointed with the culture of consumerism and the superficiality which is material success. They seek to give their existence a spiritual varnish, which could mean even a change of life.

This intellectual approach cannot belong more than to people with strong background and whose daily concerns go beyond material needs. Therefore, this group is often part of the dominant social culture or, where appropriate, of the counterculture. Buddhism is, for them, something quite personal and not generally shared with friends or family, so it serves no social interests.

Along with this group, the second group, the Buddhist missionaries, is the one in which is based the spread of Buddhism in Spain. The aforementioned examples of Buddhist centers correspond directly to teachers or small communities that arrived in the country for this purpose, voluntarily or by the hand of people in the elite group.

Among the causes that explain the almost total absence of representation of the Theravada tradition in Spain, we can mention the little immigration from the Theravada Buddhist majority countries: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. There are no historical ties that facilitated cultural and economic exchanges between our countries, resulting in a generalized mutual ignorance. This explains the absence in Spain of the phenomenon what is called “ethnic Buddhism”. Only in recent years the country has seen waves of immigrants from the East, specifically from China. The future consequences of this fact are yet to be seen.

AEBT - Spanish Association of Theravada Buddhism.

The Spanish Association of Theravada Buddhism (AEBT) is a non-profit religious organization founded in March 2008.

This project was developed among various of the most important cities of Spain: Barcelona, Madrid, Alicante, Zaragoza and Castellon, the cities where the founding members reside.

We do not intend in any way to assume the representation of all followers in Theravada Buddhism in the country, but we hope that anyone sincerely interested in the Buddhadhamma can join us to share their experience of the Dhamma and help to promote the Buddha's original teachings in Spain. The association has finalized its policy and objectives, which are described below:

- To become a meeting point for the Spaniards or those residents in Spain who are interested in Buddhadhamma.
- To contribute to the original Buddhist teachings, as they are reflected in the Ti-pitaka or Pali Canon, so they are kept alive in our country.
- To promote visits of monks and nuns of the Theravada tradition, to organize events such as Vipassana meditation retreats, lectures, etc.
- We are not only interested in the theoretical aspects of Teaching. Moreover, one of our goals is to promote the practice of Vipassana meditation, the method of meditation that the Buddha himself taught.
- The ultimate aim in our horizon is to join forces and resources to put "the cornerstone" of what, in the future, will become a Buddhist Center of the Theravada tradition in Spain.

Project for the Spanish Center of Theravada Buddhism.

The Spanish Association of Theravada Buddhism considers that it's absolutely necessary to create a Center that can serve as a stimulus for the dissemination and practice of the Dhamma in Spain. The existence of this center becomes a necessary and sufficient condition because the experience of recent years has shown us that there have been a large number of individual efforts that have not had the desired result due to the limitations of the geographical dispersion or the scope thereof. We can see, almost daily, through our website and other means, that there is a real demand among Theravada Buddhist community and supporters for the creation of a center.

Western society is undergoing a crisis that goes far beyond the mere economics; there is a real crisis of values. From our life experience and our contacts with the countries of Asia, we know that Buddhism is the answer. At the same time, we have a responsibility towards the society in which we live. If we want to change Western society and integrate Buddhism into it, we must create the appropriate institutions.

Always after the retreats we organize, many of the people involved in them feel that they want to extend this kind of experience. Despite the difficulties of living in large cities and they're absorbed by their duties, they know that they want to live with other Buddhists, they want more time to reflect on the Dhamma and, of course, they want to have more opportunities to practice. Our initiative is being greeted with real enthusiasm. For our part, we believe that we have the responsibility to respond to this demand and this is the message we wanted to bring here today. The bridge between East and West should be built on both sides.

The initiative, which has been brought to the attention of Spanish authorities, has been received very favorably. While it is true that Buddhism is known in a very general or superficial way, the idea that ordinary people have of it is very positive. Asian immigration in Spain has a great social value and the administration is willing to make efforts to further integration of these communities. Moreover, other faiths such as Islam, whose communities are more socially problematic - in Spain like in other countries - have received institutional support. Tacitly, we know that the Spanish administration may prefer to give their support to the creation of a large Buddhist center than to other non-Christian religious centers.

Our project is a comprehensive center, which may fit all socio-cultural events around the Theravada Buddhism. We are thinking about a center which will spread both culture and information while permitting the practice of the Buddhist life. As mentioned above, there is an intellectual interest to Buddhism, but in this case we do not mean personal interests but academic. Some Spanish universities already offer specialized studies in Buddhist philosophy and we are taking requests for cooperation in knowledge sharing. Fortunately, with the invaluable help of some Venerable Bhikkhus, we can meet those demands.

If we are to integrate fundamental Buddhist ideas in our Western society-ideas that have surprised those previously unacquainted with the force of a revelation - we must show them to people with high educational level. We also need to establish, where possible, the connections between Buddhist ideas and Western concepts. For that we need the best means. Our Center must have adequate space for a library and research labors such as debate of ideas or texts translation and editing.

However, we cannot separate the philosophical issue from the religious issue. In Spain, as in other Western countries, we have checked the existence of "meditators", people who don't know the philosophy behind the meditation practice. Although in our opinion this is a sad fact, our work must be inclusive and not exclusive. These people need to know the Dhamma from our hand and to know the true meaning and purpose of meditation and its importance for the practice of the Dhamma, both for monks and for the laity. To do this, we will welcome them in our facilities to perform our Vipassana meditation retreats of various lengths, always accompanied by appropriate training in the Dhamma.

The center will have a monastery with capacity for resident and visitor bhikkhus. We want to have an open center, away from ethnic centers that have proliferated especially in the United States and are supported by ethnic communities to which, in turn, they serve. We want our center not to be identified with any particular school and all at once. We think that this exercise of "eclecticism" will abound in the quality of teaching. We hope that the coexistence of bhikkhus from different schools will be an enriching experience for all.

Being Buddhist in Spain, and throughout the West, is difficult to the extent that, as there is no tradition, the social mainstream is not favorable, and not only so, but usually walking in the opposite direction. It's not a secret that the establishment of a center that includes a monastery and, of course, a temple in Spain would pose a number of difficulties. To overcome them, first we must get the center to be recognized by the community as their own. We must flee from orientalisms that can result in considering it as something exotic by the people. The architectural team who has been working on the design of buildings has taken many months studying the functions and needs of the center and have been trying to combine religious character of Buddhism, practical use, monumentality and Spanish architectural tradition.

On the other hand, the relationship that can be established between the community and the center's residents will also be very different from the usual relationship between a community in Asia and the bhikkhus of the nearest temple. In the Catholic tradition, the priest is responsible for his flock. According to the practice of Dhamma, is the community which is responsible for the maintenance of the bhikkhus. Therefore, for the location of the center, we are thinking about a charming natural environment in the surroundings of small village near Madrid. It seeks to foster a direct relationship between village's people and the bhikkhus at the center. Evidently, the maintenance and support of it will depend on the Buddhist community and the Spanish Association of Theravada Buddhism. As for the involvement of the local administration, the property formula that we will use is that of a right to use a public land, so we won't need to incur in expenses to purchase real estate, thereby reducing the budget.

The metropolitan area of the capital of Spain has a population of nearly 7 million people, ensuring a sufficient critical mass of users and visitors for the center.

At present there is already a list of possible cities interested in hosting the Buddhist center on its territory. In our conversations with different majors, we had the opportunity to highlight the ethical values of Buddhist philosophy, which results in the social function that can be done for the community from the center. This social function will be a true reflection of the meritorious actions contained in the teachings of the Buddha. In the future, social initiatives will be launched in order to provide added value to the teaching and training activities provided by the center. Once we have the project's final draft, we will consider different options and offers from the various municipalities.

The project to come true.

As you can see, from Spain, we are prepared to give all necessary support to the creation of the first center of Theravada Buddhism in this country. During last months, we had the opportunity of discussing about our project on the occasion of different trips to Theravada countries. We have always received support and consideration and this has led us to think about the real possibility of turning this dream into a reality.

From this forum, we invite all Theravada Buddhist countries and institutions to lend strong support to carry out the financing for building the center. We emphasize our determination that this is a project of all, so that all the initiatives, opinions, suggestions and help are welcome.

BUDDHISM IN NEW LANDS

Winston Velazco

Undoubtedly we are living in a speedy and changing world nowadays. For Buddhism this is of a crucial point of attention because the Sangha is facing a major challenge to sustain and establish the Buddha-Dhamma in old and new lands respectively. In places were the Dhamma is strong, as for example traditional Buddhist countries, the Sangha, as the visible representation of the Triple Gem, is facing clear and distinctive barriers to overcome in the 21st century if they want to continue being the representation of the Buddha in the world, this means, maintaining Buddha's values and principles as he laid them out more than two centuries ago. Breafly, regarding these barriers, we can mention for example the increasing and rapid changes in the influence of technology and communication in society; the people's pursuit for a better and more professional education than ever; as the cities become more and more populated due to a very high economic activities in search of wealthy standard of living leads society to drive its attention away from spiritual matters; and the increasing tendency to social and international conflicts among people intensifying day by day human differences, are some of the challenges that the Sangha is facing nowadays in its interrelationship with the laity.

This can be said that in general, is the picture of the entire world, but I mentioned towards traditional Buddhist countries where the Buddha-Dhamma is strong because for new lands beside these above mentioned challenges there are some other aspects that have to be in consideration to understand what it means to spread the Buddha-Dhamma there. One first point to consider is that for the Sangha to be established in new lands it has to be clear that the soil where it will develop its influence may be full of the wrong views that the Buddha taught. These wrong views have set firm hold in the mind of the people and have produced certain patterns of thought in the culture of these new lands. As a result this may lead to a rejection towards new and different ideas. A second aspect that needs to be considered is the nature of the interrelationship between the Sangha and the laity as it is understood since the time of the Buddha. Current days show a clear deterioration of the human values which will redound into a weaker relationship among individuals and their views for spiritual organizations. Also, how Buddhism engages areas where western world have developed for long time such as poverty, human rights, justice, etc., it is a matter of the perception of people on adopting Buddhist values in new lands.

The increasing speed of technology is a major factor that needs to be into consideration when analyzing Buddhism in new lands, in a positive way though. Nowadays technology has improved the standard of living to a certain level, reduced child mortality. and diseases such as malaria and others have decreased in a high percentage during the last few decades compared to a couple of centuries ago. Also, the life expectancy has almost doubled from the beginning of the 20th century. These things among others have made people to be now in a better position to pursuit more and better education than ever. Also with the development of the Internet, information is available around the globe in a way that it was unthinkable just twenty or thirty years ago. All these have made Buddhism available to anyone who has access to technology possible in a way that in the past was only available in remote places and only coming from the Sangha, like in temples at Buddhist

countries. In a country like Venezuela about 37% of the population has access to Internet, compared with the 70% average in developed countries.[1]

But this is not the main concern when analyzing Buddhism in new lands because technology is now improving at an exponential rate; and also, it doesn't seem to soothe desires and provide contentment in people but the opposite. Furthermore, more needs to be proven on how is the spread of Buddhism thanks to the Internet. Therefore, this is another problem. What is more important to understand in our concern are the other two factors mentioned above: wrong views, and the interrelationship between the Sangha and laity.

In a country like Venezuela where about 98% of the population is Christian, mostly Roman Catholics,[2] one that has numerous followers in the world, a very well established pattern of thinking by culture is a main barrier when introducing another school of thought as a spiritual path. The Buddha discovered that human beings have a latent tendency to cling to unwholesome views conditioned by contact; where cultural education by family and schools count as contact. Although Buddhism is not invasive, when people encounter it at the beginning is a psychological shock the fact that it does not introduce the concept of an omnipresent ruler of experience of the person. The major wrong view present in countries like Venezuela is aformentioned in the Brahmajāla Sutta; partially among the ones that have to be with the explanations about the beginning of things or the origin of man and the universe, and partially with the views concerning the destiny of beings after death, or the ultimate destiny of living beings. Particularly, couple of examples are, wrong view 5, as stated in the Digha Nikaya (Translation by Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publication 1987), in respect with point 2.6 which is the first case with the view of partly Eternalists and partly Non-Eternalis, concerning a creator being eternalist and the being created impermanent; also with respect with the same view, wrong view 8, the fourth way, where thought, mind or consciousness, is considered as self that is permanent, eternal, not subject to change, and the material form (Rupa) being impermanent.

Few schools of Buddhism are somehow present in non-buddhist countries. For example in Venezuela there is mostly Tibetan Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. This is of a particular interest because for these schools people do not need to be Buddhists in order to practice Buddhism. This is so because without much explanation on Buddhism doctrine or taking refuge on the Triple Gems people can practice meditation and start experiencing the benefits of it. But although this is in a way a good benefit, it is not the final aim of Buddha-Dhamma at all; much has to be done in this regards. Going deeper from this stage, the enormous barrier that Buddhism confront, in other words, is the cultural background on "Attā" which is established in people's mental continuum for centuries. For example, there are practitioners of Zen Buddhist meditation for more than ten years of practice and still saying "thanks God" when something good happens to them or also, being God's will if something bad happens to them. In non-buddhist countries it is in the root of culture the concept of Attā.

The other face of the coin on the concept of an omnipresent being ruler of human faith, is that it is tied with morality. Most of the population that lies on this ground seems to be "moral" due to the believe on future well being granted on this omnipresent being or punishment in the opposite cases. In a country like Venezuela, where about 33% of the population is living in state

[1] Internet World Stats; www.internetworldstats.com.

[2] Source: Wikipedia, but most of the information in the Internet says the same.

of poverty (Instituto Nacional de Estadistica INE, National Institute of Statistics) and the sympathy for the head ruler of the government is the majority of it (for particular reasons that are not the scope of this paper), and he begs to God in public for extending his life under a terminal disease, it is a strong sign of ignorance within the country. Recently there have been known cases, although I am sure it is more common that it is publicly known, that prove that faith in omnipresence and intelligent all powerful force or entity diminishes quickly under the eye of reason, critical thinking, and deduction; which is an attitude strengthened in Buddhism.

It is my understanding that the concept of Attā goes indirectly proportional with the sense of urgency present in people (this is sensing *saṃsāra* as dangerous or indulging in sensual pleasures by clinging as dangerous). It is my aim to search and measure the two variables, the concept of Attā and the sense of urgency to prove that they go in opposite directions. This means that as much is the sense of urgency the easier to break the concept of Attā psychologically, and vice versa. The conduct of this research will be done through a field questionnaire aiming to measure both variables against the decisions the person has made in life in terms of the spiritual path, conducted into different social stratus.

If this theory is proven true, then, for non-buddhist countries, it is worthy of applying more efforts to awake the sense of urgency in people through the teachings of wholesome world view (the first factor on the Noble Eightfold Path) as the starting point of all moral endeavor, and then Kamma, along with Buddhist ethics. Of course meditation can not be left aside at any moment since both have to be hand by hand, study and practice, in order for the individual to develop into the spiritual path.

About the interrelationship between the Sangha and laity, now more than ever the monastic Sangha is neededfor the continuing presence of the three Jewels in the world, and especially in new lands, where this presence is weak or in some cases misunderstood. Furthermore, the Sangha has to go through a process of understanding and "adaptation" into the new trends where it is going to develop in order to survive and fulfill the Buddha-Dhamma principals and values. Nowadays the values of compassion and patience are becoming of vital importance grounded into the moral values from which the Sangha is such a pristine example. I think that a point to start spreading the Dhamma in new lands has to be making big efforts into the enforcement of morality and right views, as mentioned above, as a strong link with laity. Moreover, the concept of generosity, where the Sangha is most beneficiated, in terms of material sustainability, as is understood in Buddhism is not the same as is understood in non-buddhist countries. In Venezuela, for example, what is more practiced is the concept of charity. This view means that giving is good in the eyes of God and has to be done mostly to the needed, for example, poor people and/or when necessity strikes. Nothing has to do with the true meaning of generosity practiced as is taught in Buddhism where the quality and virtue of the recipients, the intention of the donor and what is giving are of equally importance in the act of generosity and the better quality of them a better deed it will be. That is why, in the view of Venezuelan people, for example, it is hard to find simpathy when supporting a spiritual organization different from the "church" through generosity. In a particular case, the Zen Center where I am familiar with, has survived financially due to many other activities related to Japanese Zen culture besides meditation, like calligraphy, Ikebana, etc. which represent an income to the Center. If the Zen Center had to live only out of the population that meditates most probably would not have made it up until now. For this reason, to establish a solid foundation of the Sangha based on the link of morality and right view, it is crucial for spreading Buddhism in new land. From

my perspective there can not be a Buddhist organization in new lands without sharing the right view as is taught in Buddhism, as for example, *Kammassakā*, the only thing that beings own is their kamma; *Kammadāyādā*, beings are the heirs of their own kamma; *Kammayonī*, all beings are the descendant of their own kamma; *Kammabandhū*, kamma alone is the real relative of all beings; *Kammappaṭissaraṇā*, kamma alone is the real refuge of all beings. This referring about Kamma, but there are other right views to take into consideration.

Also, there is not an established academic institution for Spanish speakers that seriously teach Buddhism. That is why a group of people from Mexico and other countries have taken the initiative to establish one, aiming to introduce very well structured courses of Buddhism throughout several channels of communication, for example, Internet, media, and several Universities around the Spanish speaking communities in order to have Buddhism available to people in new lands. Although the base ground is planned to be in Mexico, particularly near the Theravada Buddhist Monastery, Dhamma Vihara.

It is said that the darkest part of the night is just before dawn and even though the Buddha never spoke or foresaw the kind of transformation that the society was going to go through, always the instruction is to strive diligently in the present moment. It is my impression that society is going through a dark process of decline and degeneration in terms of moral values, but the Sangha has the tools and foundations to respond effectively and creatively to the new challenges especially in new lands. To conclude, enormous amount of work has to be done in terms of right view and morality as a true link and prosperous relationship between the Sangha and laity in new lands.

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